MAGAZINE FOR MEN

Platinum

K48486

DECEMBER 1993

DRAGGIN' LADIES

RACY WOMEN OF THE SPEED STRIP

WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS THE FATHER, THE SON AND THE HOLY DOPE

EXTREME SNOW BOARDING CLIFF NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND

TOXOID CELLULOID REVENGE OF THE NUDE, PSYCHOTRONIC B-GIRLS

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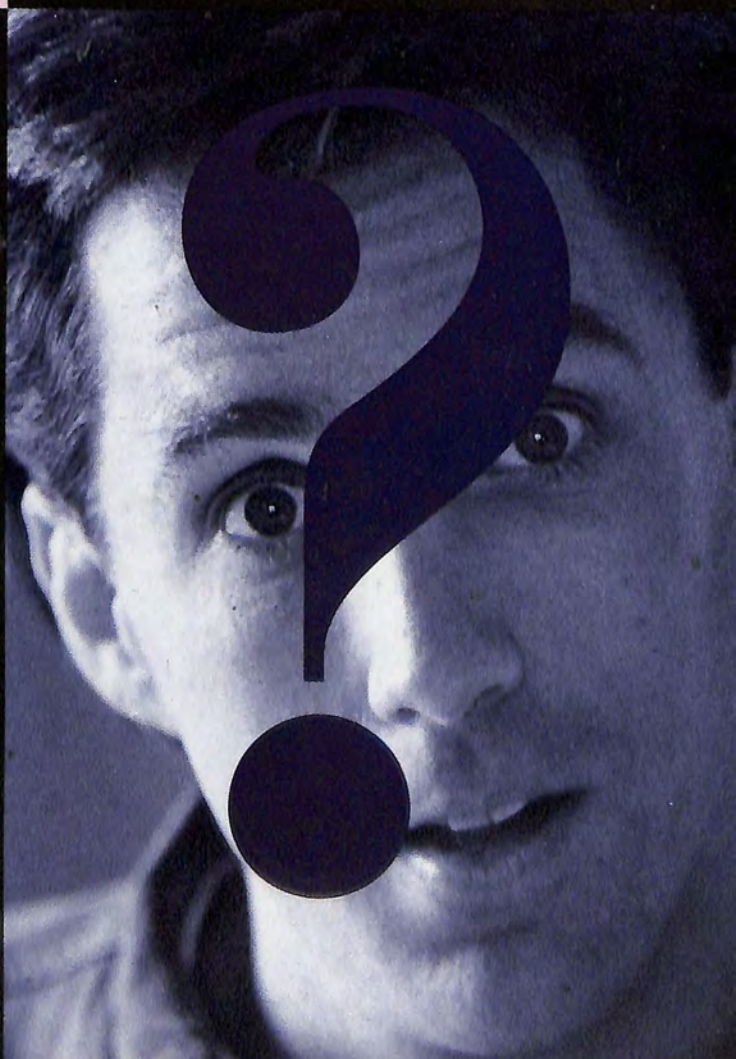
DECEMBER 1993

IS IT POSSIBLE TO APPEAR TALL, DARK AND HANDSOME

EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT?



The truth is, you're probably fine just the way you are. Besides, nothing is going to change that. So instead of wishing you were something you're not, maybe you ought to try sending out better signals.

Signals like the ones in new pheromone based Jovan Musk^2 cologne.

Signals similar to those you will find being used by nearly all our friends in the animal kingdom every day.

Animals use pheromones, odorless substances that convey messages, as a key form of communication. Messages that signal, among other things, when it is time to have sex.

Independent scientific evidence indicates that humans, too, may communicate with pheromones. And sexual attraction between a man and a woman could really be a response to this silent stimulus.

British researchers have even discovered that women exposed to these pheromones rate others as sexier, warmer and more attractive.

It's only natural to believe that pheromones should play a part in human sexuality.

For years now people have recognized Jovan Musk as the one cologne for when you're "in the mood." It reacts with a person's body chemistry to create a warm and sexy scent.

Understandably, the addition of pheromones to the clean, masculine scent of musk was the next logical step to take.

Which is exactly what was done to create new Jovan Musk^2.

A totally different, remarkably unique cologne that is designed to attract and entice. To evoke feelings of confidence and romance. To arouse and excite.

Your next logical step? What do you think, man? Go get some.

JŌVAN® MUSK^2

A PHEROMONE-BASED FRAGRANCE

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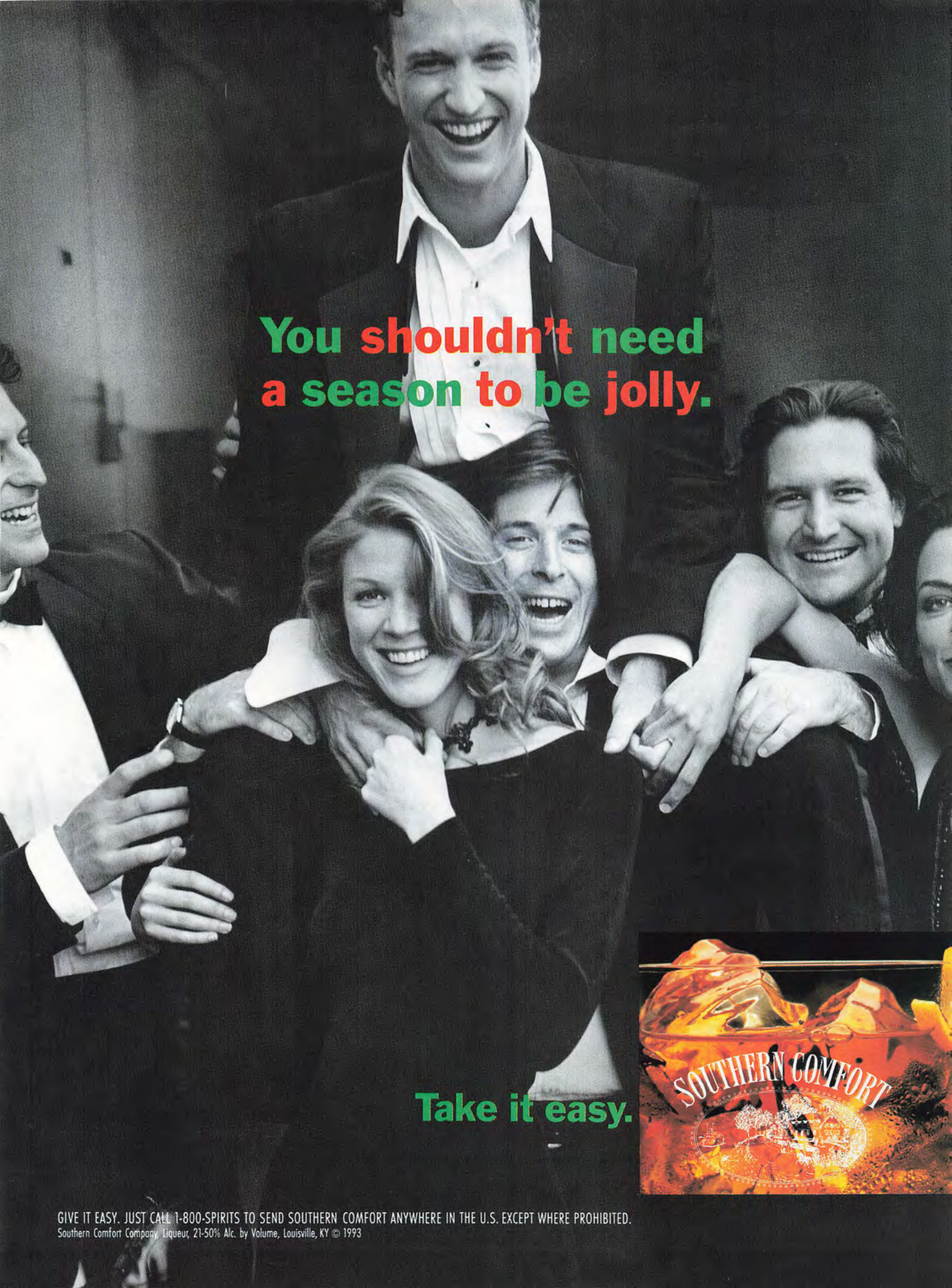

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CONTRIBUTORS

Steve Goldberg claims to spend most of his time hiding from magazine editors who are constantly trying to give him assignments. Luckily we were able to pin him down long enough to send him Christmas shopping with Gilbert Gottfried. After writing, "Yule Daze," Goldberg was so inspired that he went looking for the real meaning of Troma Films. Now that he's finished writing "Be True To Your Ghoul" for this issue, Goldberg can settle in for the winter, which he insists will be "a long one."

Bruce David, who covered the San Diego "ComicCon '93" comic book convention for our "Literati" column, is the editor and publisher of "Humor on The Cutting Edge," an innovative comic book that picks up where National Lampoon left off. David's work has also appeared in Playboy, National Lampoon and the L.A. Times magazine. His TV credits include "Alf" and "Family Ties."

Lee Crane quit his job of four years as managing editor of Transworld Snowboarding magazine because it ruined his snowboarding. Now he spends his days in Carlsbad, California surfing and drinking coffee and living life as a journeyman poet [until the snow falls]. Crane's article, "Snow Balls" is an adventurous account of extreme snowboarding, where riders must battle the elements and laugh at death. His plan is to avoid a real job for as long as possible.

Gregory Miller loves driving fast, which is a shame since all he owns is a VW Rabbit. But he dreams about it and the results appear here in "Year of The Draggin'." Miller is a regular contributor to Premiere magazine and his work has appeared in Omni, Moving Pictures International, and the L.A. Weekly. In addition, he develops and produces stories for CamNet, a national alternative news network.

Cheo Coker's column, "All That Jazzmatazz" will convince you to expand your music horizons. Coker started as a music critic at the Stanford Daily, which is published by Stanford University, where he is currently completing his senior year. In addition, Coker is managing editor of the Bomb Hip-Hop magazine and contributing editor to RapPages. His work, which includes interviews with rap greats Ice Cube, Ice-T, Run-DMC and Arrested Development, has appeared in Essence, URB and YSB magazines.

Adam Parfrey researched and wrote "Here Come the Brideski's," detailing the growing market in foreign mail-order brides. Parfrey runs Feral House, a publishing concern "dedicated to extreme and forbidden material." His book, "Apocalypse Culture," is considered an underground classic. Parfrey's latest work, "Cult Rapture: Investigations Into The Apocalyptic Mind," is scheduled to be published in the Fall of 1994. ●

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DESPERATELY SEEKING SANITY

The flyers promoting this one-of-a-kind (Thank God!) event read like a B-grade, Hollywood trailer:

WORSHIP in the driveway of Madonna's childhood home!

VISIT the places Madonna went on dates!

SEE where Madonna had her mouth taped shut by nuns!

Proving that some people have entirely too much time on their hands, "Madonnathon" — a bustier-crammed convention for fanatical devotees of the Motor City's favorite daughter — celebrated its second incarnation this August.

Dealers peddle Material Goodies at Madonnathon '93 Collector's Expo (above), while Madonnafficianados (below) compete in drag-queen contest won by Kyrstyn Monroe (right).

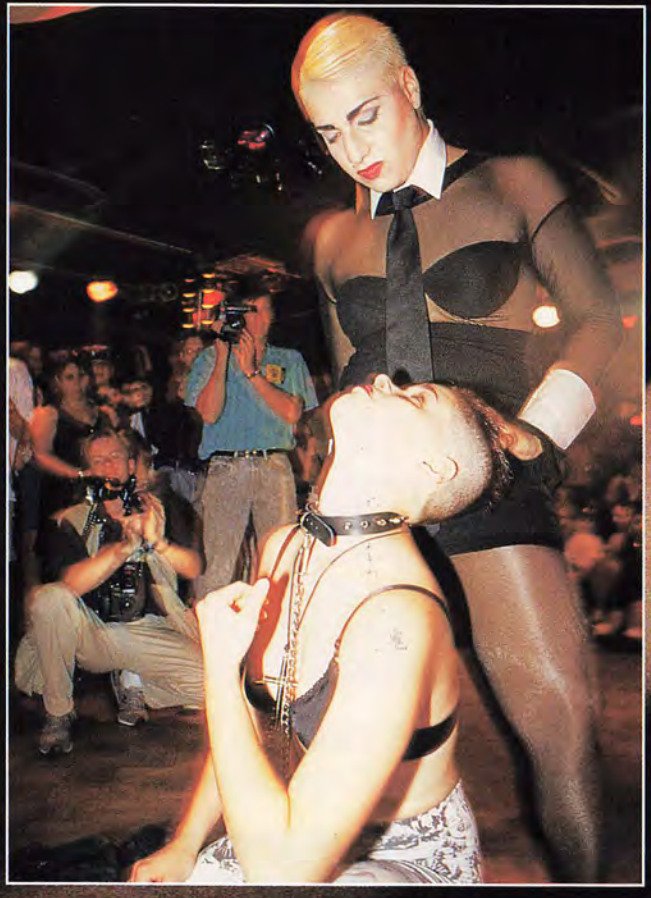
Some things simply defy scientific explanation.

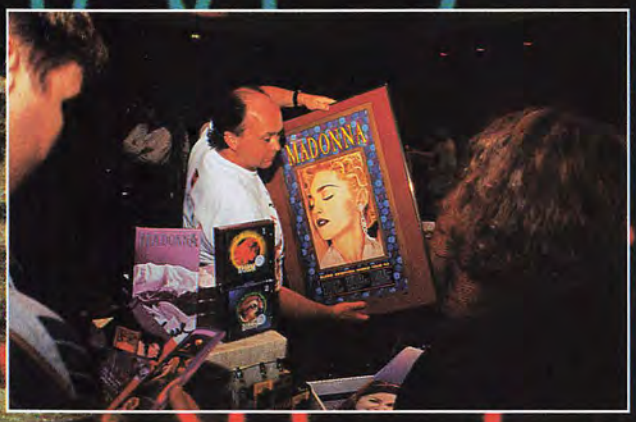
The three-day event, which was held in the suburbs of Detroit, Michigan, attracted Madonnamaniacs from as far away as Sweden and Portugal. And no wonder. Who could resist such a fun-filled itinerary? Imagine, a two-hour, 55-mile bus drive through the bedroom communities of Pontiac and Rochester, Ms. Ciccone's hometown haunts (price: $35). How about a six-hour, Monday afternoon triple feature at the local movie house? Everywhere, dealers sell "rare collectibles" (i.e., just about anything featuring Madonna's face, or whatever, on it). Material Girl wannabes from all walks of life fight tooth and nail for real cash money ($100!) in a highly competitive, female look-alike contest and an extra-special, all-male, drag-queen, lip-sync festival.

Still looking for more? Here you go. The climax of this year's Madonna jamboree occurred on the evening of August 16th, the pop icon's 35th birthday. Partygoers actually got to eat a piece of cake and sign a gigantic birthday card that organizers (cross their hearts and hope to die) promised to deliver to the absent idol.

Wow. Celebrate the good times. Come on, now, *everybody!* ●

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BILL SCHWAB





Top to Bottom: Madonnaphiles shop till they drop; Expo merchant displays Ciccone chic; lip-sync contest draws three of a kind; and Collector's Museum as altar.

GUINEA PIGS

'CHUTING THE BREEZE

You're flying through a cloudless sky in your Cessna 150, when suddenly your engine dies. No problem. You shout "Geronimo" and take to your parachute, which safely lands you, your companion *and your plane.*

It may sound like sci-fi, or a James Bond movie, but versions of this "whole-aircraft parachute recovery system," the vision of a St. Paul, Minnesota, company called Ballistic Recovery Systems (BRS), have already saved over 60 lives.

BRS has already manufactured and sold over 10,000 parachute recovery systems to builders of hang gliders, ultralights, kitplanes and other aircraft not certified by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). Having received FAA approval in May, 1993, it's now available to over 20,000 light aircraft in the U.S.

If all of this sounds just a little familiar, it should. America's Mercury, Gemini and Apollo spacecraft were designed to parachute into the sea, where they were recovered by helicopter. Even today, the rocket motors for the space shuttle, which weigh over 50,000 pounds, are designed to

parachute to earth. We won't see it on commercial airliners in the near future, however; it's estimated it would take 24 such systems to bring a 747 safely back to terra firma.

Installation of the General Aviation Recovery System (GARD) will be done at BRS' facilities in St. Paul. Price tag for the Cessna 150: $5,495.

BRS chute as life saver (above); AREX as speed demon (below).

RED ALERT

It's hard to get a speeding ticket standing still. But if you could, you would in the AREX, the red, rounded, radical roadster.

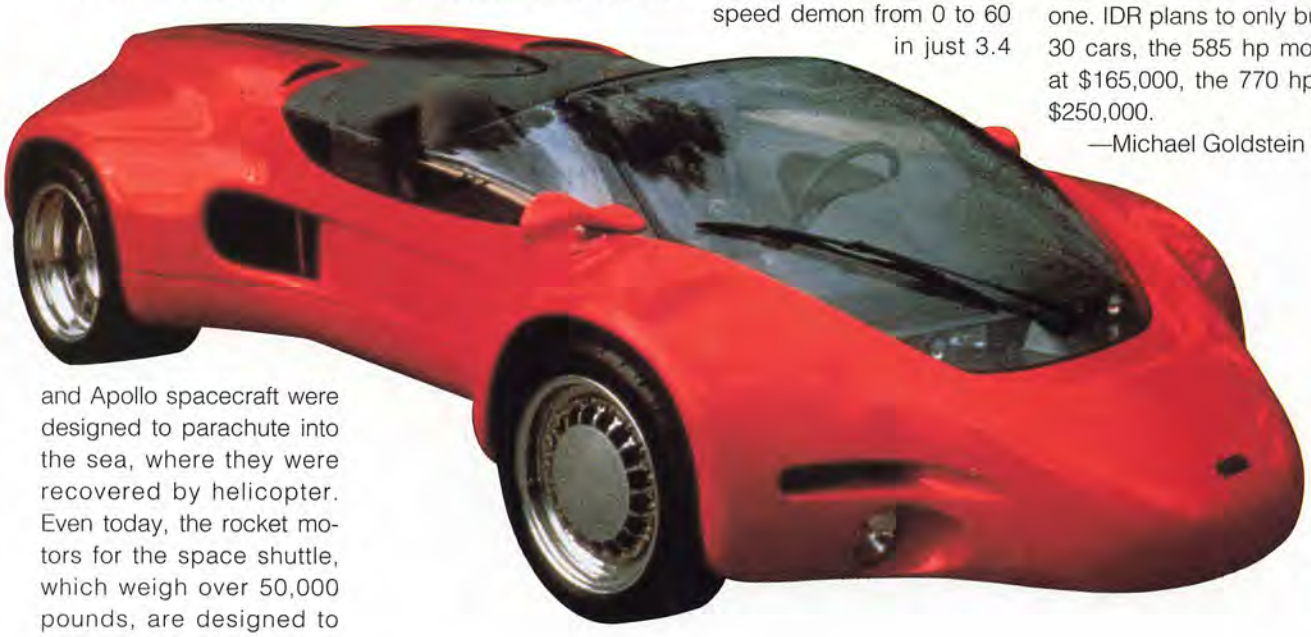
The AREX, which stands for American Roadster Experimental, was developed by designer Dave Stollery, founder of Industrial Design Research, in Laguna Beach, California, and Gale Banks Engineering, in Azusa. While its arresting sculpted shape is sure to knock your eyes out, the AREX's specs are equally impressive. It measures 14 feet long and just 43 inches high. With a curb weight of only 2600 pounds, its twin-turbocharged, 585 horsepower

engine, with five-speed transaxle, launches this speed demon from 0 to 60 in just 3.4 seconds. If you can afford a bigger speeding ticket, the Banks Twin-Turbo TPI 6.0 liter Chevy engine takes you from 0 to 100 in just 6.1 seconds, and takes the quarter mile in 10.8 seconds at a heart-stopping 143 mph.

For those who yawn at cars cut from the same cutter, the AREX certainly stands out. The driver and passenger sit way up front, just behind the front axle, and view the road through a full-perimeter windscreen, thanks to the AREX's cab-forward, rear-engine design. The teardrop-shaped AREX body is made of lightweight fiberglass composite, which sits on a chassis built in three major sections. The Indy car-like suspension is fully independent, and boasts Goodyear Eagle tires with enormous disc brakes to provide plenty of driving control and stopping power.

Besides the hefty insurance premiums you'll no doubt have to carry, there's only one problem with this futuristic ride — getting one. IDR plans to only build 30 cars, the 585 hp model at $165,000, the 770 hp at $250,000.

—Michael Goldstein ●



THE BOMBAY SAPPHIRE MARTINI. AS INTERPRETED BY ADAM TIHANY.

POUR SOMETHING PRICELESS.

Bombay® Sapphire™ Gin. 47% alc/vol (94 Proof). 100% grain neutral spirits. © 1992 Carillon Importers, Ltd., Teaneck, N.J. © 1992 Adam Tihany.

COMIC RELIEF

The kid couldn't have been more than nine years old but he was holding a wad of bills that would choke a Vegas croupier.

"I want 'Batman #497' and 10 issues of the new 'Superman,'" he said, throwing a pile of 20s down on the vendor's table.

Wandering the crowded convention floor of the 1993 San Diego Comicon — the largest comic book convention in the United States — you see this scene enacted over and over: grade school kids as comic book speculators, catering to a genuine lust for money instead of a childlike passion for their favorite super hero.

Of course, kids aren't the only ones buying comics as investments. Serious speculating is done by children of all ages, something the big comic book companies are more than happy to exploit with a whole array of special "collectible" covers.

Speaking of these die-cut, embossed, holographic wonders, Charlie Wise, the writer/artist of Blue Moon comics said, "Marvel has become the Franklin Mint of comic books. You don't read them, you collect them."

Tales of Lethargy's Steve Remen echoed these sentiments, adding that the "next big trend in comics is greed."

Is it all over for true comic book fans? Kate Worley, writer of the groundbreaking "Omaha the Cat Dancer," is optimistic, pointing to the creativity of independent publishers as a hopeful trend.

The publishers of Jab comics, for example, shot bullet holes through the center of one issue, 10 at a time. On the cover was a drawing of a man saying, "This comic has a bullet hole in it! It's not mint! My God, its not mint!"

The comic could be ordered by calibers: .22, .38, .357 and shotgun.

"We're seeing a trend toward self-expression," opined Sonny Strait of Mr. Average comics, "i.e., art instead of just another fucking house style."

Innovative, though somewhat commercial, is "Flaxen," published by Bill Liebowitz, owner of the Golden Apple comic book stores in Los Angeles. Although Flaxen is a fictionalized super heroine, the book is based on Susie Owens, a real-life, former Playboy playmate whose photos are liberally sprinkled throughout the book — a technique used in comic books of the '50s.

Self-expression takes a more unnerving turn with the recent spate of sex and violence comics, typified by such titles as "Cry For Dawn," "XXXenophile" and "System Shock." Descendants of classic, shock/horror titles like "Tales from the Crypt," these books up the ante with their detailed depiction of mutilations and, in some cases, explicit sex.

Speaking of sex, a personal appearance was put in by vixen-like Vampirella — or at least some reasonable facsimile hired by the comics' publisher. Likewise, Batman showed up at the D.C. booth while Ultraman and a couple of great-looking monsters spent their time wandering the convention floor.

As they mingled with the crowd — more than 22,000 attended — it appeared that some fans, at least, were more interested in calculating the value of the costume than in meeting a "real life" comic book character.

Comic book heroes from Star Trek (left, top) and Youngbloods (left, bottom) mingle, while neuvo comics (above) sell big time, at Comicon '93.

"How much does it cost to make a costume like that?" a 15-year-old asked one of the creatures.

"I don't know," said a voice from inside the monster suit.

"I'll bet that costume will go up in value in a few more years," the kid said to his companion.

Nodding, his friend responded, "Let's see if there's some way we can buy it." ●

—Bruce David

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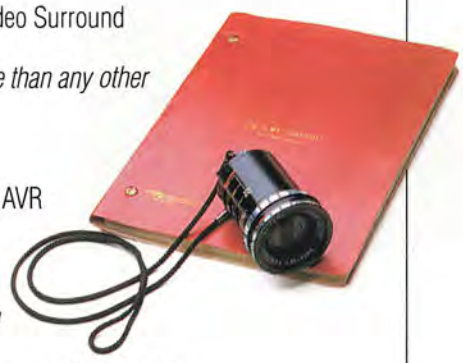

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BRONZE GOES GOLD

In July, 1969, Ron Rice had nowhere to go but up. "I was making $4,000 a year teaching school and $300 more coaching football. I was getting nowhere fast and I finally realized that I'd better find something else to do."

What Rice did was borrow $500 from his father and use his general knowledge of chemistry to concoct an all-natural, coconut oil tanning lotion he called Hawaiian Tropic. Today, Hawaiian Tropic manufactures 300 different skin care products in 12 factories worldwide and boasts over $200,000,000 in annual sales.

"It started small," explains Rice, who still has the $4 trash can he used to mix his first batch of Hawaiian Tropic lotion. "I'd go down to the beach and hand out samples to lifeguards and to people I met. Then, I started selling to little shops on the beach in Daytona. It grew from there. Eventually, we covered from Myrtle Beach to Ft. Lauderdale, which was as far as I could drive."

Clockwise from top: Rice poses with original can; Miss H.T. contestant shakes hers; H.T. at Indy; H.T. distribution fleet then & now.

Hawaiian Tropic's limited distribution helped establish the product in those early days. "It was like when you could only get Coors beer in Colorado," Rice says. "We were the only all-natural suntan oil, so tourists would buy it up and carry it back home with them. It was all word-of-mouth."

While the allure of limited availability may have initially helped turn Hawaiian Tropic into the second-largest selling suntan lotion in the world, it is maximum exposure which helps keep it there — exposure in the form of the Miss Hawaiian Tropic International beauty pageant. Sure, Hawaiian Tropic has sponsored World Pro Skiing and World Cup Surfing, backed Donnie Allison's NASCAR race team and Paul Newman's entry in the 24 Hours at LeMans. But it's the Miss Hawaiian Tropic pageant that keeps the public's engines revved.

The week-long pageant, which is held annually during spring break in Daytona Beach, Florida, and televised worldwide, features up to 100 of the most gorgeous women ever to sport a tan. These are the finalists, selected from among the 20,000-30,000 contestants who enter local pageants throughout the year.

In America, regional winners compete in August for the title of Miss Hawaiian Tropic U.S.A., with finalists (each country is allowed four entrants) qualifying for the international competition. (This year's pageant was held aboard a Norwegian cruise ship in the Virgin Islands.) The five bikini-clad lovelies chosen as International Grand Finalists (the Queen and her court) then accompany Rice on a nationwide promotional tour which includes star-studded parties and high-profile sporting events.

"I'm one lucky guy," Rice notes.

Yet, luck had little to do with the man's initial success. Rice came from a poor mountain family in North Carolina, and he learned the importance of hard work at an early age. In fact, he has a very simple explanation for his success: "What made it all work," Rice says, "was the fact that I never quit. I kept on pushing."

Not bad for a guy who, at 29, was a high school chemistry teacher who'd taught at seven schools in eight years and been fired six times. ●

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The design atop the hand guard symbolizes the *shuriken*, the throwing star, an integral part of the Ninja's legendary original sword. Beneath this guard is a sculptured dragon. And both are coated in 24 karat gold, as are the other sculptures that grace the pommel, hilt, and even the hidden "knives."

Since the crafting of such swords is virtually forbidden in Japan these days, the sword is being created by the master swordsmiths of Toledo, Spain, whose centuries-old tradition of fine craftsmanship has made Toledo steel the world-wide standard of excellence.

But the sword work is available *exclusively* from The Franklin Mint. The issue price of $675, payable in monthly installments, includes the hardwood display stand.

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Top: the pommel sculpture depicts a Samurai warrior, once the Ninja's enemy, and is layered in 24 karat gold. Bottom: displayed on its custom-designed base, *The Sword of the Ninja* will be a dramatic accent to any decor or setting.

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LIGHTS, CAMERA, LOGO

The Led Zeppelin theory of public relations holds that there is no such thing as bad publicity; it doesn't matter what they say as long as they spell the name right. Apparently, corporate America concurs.

This would explain why the motorheads at Ford got giddy when a born-again Tyrannosaurus Rex played kickball with a Ford Explorer in the megafilm, "Jurassic Park." Never mind that the emergency brake failed to hold when the vehicle was parked vertically in a tree.

Jurassic Parking: Have you dribbled a Ford lately?

The scene gave the Explorer supporting actor status in a film that's made more money than the national debt. And liike they say in Hollywood, "That's product placement."

The practice of placing products in film first gained notoriety in 1982 after an M&M/Mars marketing executive, in what must have been a costly career move, decided to pass on a new Steven Spielberg movie called "ET." When Hershey's hopped onboard, Reese's Pieces became an overnight success, boasting a 64% increase in annual sales

The placement industry is represented by the Entertainment Marketing & Resources Association (EMRA), a collective of 26 product placement companies and seven film studios. "We're here," explains EMRA President Frank Devaney, the placement meister for the Hollywood PR firm of Rogers & Cowan, "because we were asked to be here by the [film] industry, and to also represent manufacturers. It impacts cost savings and adds reality."

How? The equation is a simple *soixante-neuf*: filmmakers need stuff to make their movies, and people who make the stuff need media exposure. But, of course, there's always a fly in the ointment.

This symbiotic relationship has drawn the ire of several public interest groups, including the Washington, D.C.-based Center for the Study of Commercialism (CSC). "In a perfect world there wouldn't be a need to auction off the audience," asserts CSC spokesperson Karen Brown. The CSC contends that moviegoers have become targets of feature-length commercials. They have lobbied the FTC for labeling requirements to inform viewers at the beginning of a film about paid placements.

According to Devaney, 95% of product placements take the form of unpaid barter — i.e., use it, don't lose it, and there's no charge for the prop. In other cases, it's a back-end/joint promotional deal, such as Diet Pepsi's post-release ad tie-in with "Terminator 2," and last summer's "Coneheads"/Subway Sandwich marriage. In the former, both sides came out ahead; but all the salami in the world couldn't help "Coneheads."

Like any PR gambit, nothing is guaranteed. Sometimes it works, and sometimes you go to court. That's what Black & Decker did when their prearranged deal to put a cordless drill into Bruce Willis' hands in "Die Hard 2" ended up on the cutting room floor. B&D's promotional sweepstakes and an ad campaign based on the film died hard, and the toolmaker filed a $150,000 lawsuit against 20th Century Fox and the ad agency Young & Rubicam.

Product usage can be subtly effective or garishly intrusive. "Back to the Future II" nailed theatergoers to their seats with an unapologetic barrage of Nike, Texaco, Mattel, Pizza Hut, Black & Decker, AT&T and Michael J. Fox's favorite beverage, Pepsi. Hence, the send-up in "Wayne's World," when Mike Myers promises not to sell out, while munching Pizza Hut pizza followed by an Advil chaser.

On the other hand, products sometimes show up in films that send manufacturers running for cover. Placement guru Larry Dorn, who has represented TWA and Pepsi, among others, was once asked by AMF Corp. to dissuade a director from filming an illicit drug scene in a bowling alley, the heart of AMF's recreational business.

It was worse for Coca-Cola, when product placement took a too-literal turn in the classic porn film, "Deep Throat." The Heimlich maneuvers must have been flying in Coke's corporate headquarters in Atlanta, Georgia, when one of Linda Lovelace's many liaisons poured the Real Thing into her nether regions. It was certainly not the endorsement the company was looking for. But at least Linda's co-star got the tag line right: "Things *do* go better with Coke." ●

—Steve Goldberg

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ALL THAT JAZZMATAZZ

Most people who really appreciate one form of music usually can't stand the others. And very often, what they really can't stand is jazz. When I was younger, I couldn't understand how anyone could listen to jazz; my cousins and I saw it as Sunday-afternoons-at-Grandfather's-house stuff. On long car trips between New Jersey and Connecticut my aunt played what seemed like the same Thelonious Monk tape over and over again.

"Can't we put on something good?"

Hadn't these grownups heard of The Fat Boys? How adults could listen to music that lasted for half an hour and was undanceable was beyond all comprehension.

Flip-side. What jazz was to me, hip hop is to my Grandmother. An unlistenable, unpleasant reminder of the city projects from which she escaped.

"Turn that off!" she belts anytime she catches me changing channels from her "Kojak" reruns to "Yo! MTV Raps." Something about "ill-mannered youngsters cursing up a storm, talking about all types of nasty things," and an overabundance of bass ("Boy, you know I can feel that all the way in the other room!").

Given that jazz and hip hop fans usually fall on opposite sides of the musical equation, merging the two might sound like a real bad idea. But, as recent tracks attest, the combination is electrifying.

Digable Planets are the most commercially popular of today's hip-hop/jazz fusionists. Their smooth debut, "Reachin (A Refutation of Time And Space)" is an ample slice of "cool" period Bohemian jazz fused with '70s funk — a perfect introduction to the genre.

"Jazzmatazz," the solo project of Gangstarr's Guru, matches the rapper with some original jazz masters rather than their samples. Guests include trumpeter Donald Byrd, tenor/saxophonist Branford Marsalis, vibraphonist Roy Ayers and pianist Lonnie Liston Smith. Marsalis' performance on "Transit Ride," and Ayers' funk ambiance on "Take a Look At Yourself," epitomize the seamless juxtaposition of jazz rhythm and hip hop flavor.

"Midnight Marauders," the third release by A Tribe Called Quest, is the "hard bop" answer to Digable Planets. The cut "Planeteers," characterized by "street-oriented" beats with sophisticated, polyrhythmic sample tracks, is jazz hip hop at it's most delightfully complex. The mesmerizing "Suck Niggas," with the restructuring of Freddie Hubbard's "Red Clay" is reason enough to pick up this disc. Finally, comes Freestyle Fellowship with their genre-bending debut, "Inner City Boundaries." On it, "Free-styling" bridges pure jazz and hip-hop improvisation where, as in a live performance, the ambiance has complete control over the tone and content of the rhyme. Songs such as "Hot Potato" and "Park Bench People" close the gap between the lyrical styles of jazz greats like Jon Hendricks and rappers like Treach and KRS-One.

From left: Miles Davis with Eazy Mo Bee, and Branford Marsalis with Guru. Above: Digable Planets.

Jazz fusion isn't likely to play out soon. With the majority of rappers moving away from mainstream material, producers are thumbing even deeper through their parents dusty records. With a new generation just discovering the likes of Ronnie Laws, Lou Donaldson and Grant Green, to name a few, there are bound to be more thrilling compilations in the future. Who knows? Maybe your kids will one day find a use for all your old Bon Jovi and Public Enemy records — after they stop complaining about having to listen to them on car trips, that is. ●

—C.H. Coker

Surprisingly Mild.

Drum. Your Own Rhythm.

RAM IT UP YOUR ASS

Sorry, but there's no other way to describe my odyssey into the mind-numbing world of computer retail. Except for maybe, suck my hard drive.

Like most people, I was computer illiterate when I started my quest for the digital grail. To me, "DOS" meant one thing: "TWO" in Spanish. "Windows" were things on the side of my house, and a "mouse" was the thing sitting under my left eye.

But something came over me when I heard about the price wars sweeping through the computer industry, and the powerful, new crop of systems on the market. A tingling sensation ran up my spine. It was time to tackle my technophobia and hop on the microchip train.

I believed that a PC would make my life better — sort of an Aladdin's lamp for the '90s. So, I called my ex-hacker-now-respectable-computer-salesman friend, Joe, and asked if he'd help out. I told him I wanted to improve my life. And that high-resolution, graphic manipulations would be essential if I were to succeed. He said I should buy some computer magazines. Thanks so much, Joe, for the inside information.

I poured through Mac World, PC World, PC Laptop and Windows. I read a bunch of this and that about SyQuests, midis, hard drives, virtual memory and flopticals. I didn't need a Cray computer to figure out that my Coleco-Vision ass was in very deep shit.

But I would not be denied. I kept repeating to myself, over and over, "If the girl at the DMV can do it, I can do it, too."

The first decision I faced was whether to go the Mac or IBM route. While

IBM seemed ideal for business or word processing, I finally opted for Macintosh because of its superior graphic applications (read: cooler colors). The next big question was, to PowerBook or not to PowerBook. This, of course, called for a second trip to the newsstand, to find out exactly what PowerBook meant.

It was around this time that I began to notice the early warning signs of my changing persona: I was starting to think exclusively about RAM, Cache Slots, SIMMS and the all-time perplexer, CD-ROM. Even my girlfriend noticed it one evening when, in a fit of playfulness, I called her "Floppy." I'd caught a nasty, not on-line but in-brain, virus; a classic case of computeritis.

After many agonizing and sleepless nights (alone...) I decided I would buy a Macintosh Centris 610 — a mid-range workhorse with plenty of processing power, built in Ethernet, 12 megabytes of RAM, a 230-megabyte hard drive, no math co-processor and one NuBus slot. Perfect for my needs if you ignore the fact that I had no idea what the fuck this all meant.

It didn't matter. I was ecstatic. All my chips were falling into place. I called my ex-hacker friend and told him what I was planning to purchase. He said I should keep my eyes on the Saturday Sports Section of the Times, which was were he had always found the best deals (Giants 7, Mets 3, LCII just $799!). I religiously checked the paper and tracked the plummeting prices waiting for a sign from God. Or Steve Jobs.

But as luck would have it, I had to act fast. On the horizon loomed the just-announced SuperPC, an IBM-Apple-Motorola joint venture that was going to turn the PC world on its ear. Great. After a relentless, three-month ordeal, someone was going to switch the deck on me. Cybernetic nirvana denied by corporate machination. Eat me. I wasn't waiting. It was time to shit or get off the computer.

I'll always remember that Saturday morning when I picked up the paper and there it was, staring right at me like a long, lost brother: my Centris, at a price that I would be willing to pay, also known as the "sizzling summer special." At last, my chip had come in.

Now I'm at home, digging myself, smirking with pride at the great choice I made. My friends have all come by for a gawk, like they would for a newborn baby. I set up a work station. Everything is perfect. How do I turn it on? ●

—Antonio Mendoza

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CAGED IN

Fame, I've found, is a lesson in anxiety. Particularly because I'm not famous. For example, I'd been invited to a movie premier. My date and I entered the theater and she went off to powder her nose, leaving me in the lobby. As I waited against a wall, two young girls approached.

"Excuse me, Mr. Cage," one girl asked shyly, a pen and paper in hand, "could we have your autograph?"

"I'm sorry, but I'm not him," I smiled.

"We knew you'd say that," the other girl chimed in.

"But I'm not him."

"All we want is your autograph. We promise not to tell anyone," she nodded.

NICOLAS CAGE (ME)

"But I'm not him."

"You're gonna make us cry."

"Really, I don't want to make you cry. But I'm not him," I said again. People were starting to watch. But the star-struck girls were undaunted.

"Show us your chest hair."

Frankly, the look doesn't travel very well. I was recently at the Miami airport and had to use the bathroom before boarding my plane. At the urinal, I felt someone staring. I tried to focus on the wall, but the staring continued. Finally, scowling, I turned to face my intruder (ready to belt the guy if necessary). But, as my eyes met the spectacles of this conservative-looking gentleman, the most harmless smile I've ever seen crossed his face.

"It's you, I knew it!" he exclaimed triumphantly, thrusting his hand out to shake mine.

On another trip, to Austin, Texas, I walked up to the check-in counter, and was greeted with a silent, knowing stare.

"You're that actor, aren't you," the clerk admired. Without saying no, I handed her my ticket, which obviously stated that I wasn't. At that point a second clerk walked up to us.

"Traveling incognito, Mr. Cage?"

As best as I can determine, Nick and I are popular guys. People liked us in "Moonstruck," "Honeymoon in Vegas" and "Raising Arizona." They loved us in "Valley Girl" but didn't think much of the film. Women want to take us home. Grandmothers like to fix us up. Bouncers at clubs from New York to Los Angeles are always happy to see us. We don't cause a lot of trouble. We aren't jerks.

But nobody's perfect, not even us. On one Saturday night in Los Angeles, Nick (me) was out at a club that Nick (him) had frequented before.

I sat down on a stool and ordered. As I waited for my drink, the woman sitting next to me turned and saw me. When our eyes met, I realized that hers were filled with rage. A short moment later, my face was slapped.

"You're an asshole," she swore, before storming out the door.

Mine is a charmed life. I get invited to the best parties, ushered to the power seat in restaurants, skip lines at night clubs. I get drinks bought for me, gifts given to me, and people wanting my autograph. I stop traffic on streets, hush crowds in airports and generally cause a commotion wherever I go. Why?

Because I bear a remarkable likeness to...

NICOLAS CAGE (HIM) NICOLAS CAGE (ME)

Hey, I could go on about this stuff for weeks. Sometimes it's fun and sometimes it's an experience in terror being Nick (him, not me). Sometimes it's depressing being Nick (me, not him). But mostly it's just a part of my life, and lately I've realized I have a modicum of power over his. My friends think it's my responsibility to keep everyone liking Nick as much as they do.

Do me a favor, Nick, don't run for President. ●

—Dale Horning

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SEX AT FIRST SIGHT?

Steve Simels:

Gore Vidal once observed that you should never turn down an opportunity to have sex or be on television. Then again, he said that long before sex got scary.

In fact, today there are occasions when you probably should decline the opportunity for sex, and I don't mean the obvious ones, like bachelor parties at Haitian massage parlors. What I'm referring to, of course, is that most anxiety-inducing of contemporary mating rituals — the (gulp) first date.

I write this knowing full well that the immediate reaction of even the most enlightened, fem-simp, '90s kind of guy who reads this will be, if he's honest, "What the fuck is this clown talking about?" After all, men are genetically programmed to try to get into the pants of any woman they date, or to later lie about their inability to do so. And certainly, there are magic moments when two relative strangers are so attracted to each other that all thoughts of caution are rightly obliterated; that kind of passion is, frankly, one of the experiences that makes our otherwise drab lives worth living.

Magic notwithstanding, the fact of the matter is that sex, like money, changes everything. And if you're trying to get to know someone, chances are that making love too soon will screw up the dynamic.

We all know the consequences of first date sex. Suddenly, things are no longer casual or exploratory. You've got a genuine relationship on your hands, and no one needs that kind of pressure early on. Face it, most two people are essentially incompatible, and to delay that depressing but inevitable realization by forcing an intimacy that is almost certainly premature, is to risk complications that blind you to the fact that the two of you have absolutely nothing in common.

Nonetheless, if your date for the evening is Winona Ryder, and if the opportunity for sex presents itself, feel free to disregard all of the above.

Sara Nelson:

I can't believe I am about to invoke a name that has become synonymous with virtually every type of sociopathic sexual behavior, but it was Woody ("the heart wants what it wants") Allen who made the most pertinent point about sex on a first date. In "Annie Hall," during his initial date with Diane Keaton, Woody leaned over — okay, stood on tiptoe — to kiss her on the way to dinner, and said, basically, "Let's kiss now and get it over with so that I'm not riddled with anxiety all night and we can enjoy a more relaxed evening together." To which thousands of post-'60s, sexually liberated audience members mouthed a silent "Amen."

True, first date sex can be risky. Today's singles' scene is ripe with viruses, both metabolic and humanoid. And, of course, one always runs the risk of emotional trauma brought on by mixed messages, dashed expectations and painful, morning-after confrontations.

But what about the unabashed, hair-curling, window-steaming, boot-knocking, face-down, ass-up kind of fun that only comes from not knowing exactly where your partner stands on toe-sucking and ear-licking? Or the freedom that comes from imagining a future with a person whose past you haven't yet met? Or about not wanting/knowing/caring about that future, and living actively, deliciously and thrillingly in the moment?

Make no mistake, I'm not talking about misleading anybody with false promises. First date sex offers no guarantees. But as a male friend of mine once confessed when describing a free-spirited woman he'd just begun seeing, "It's as if sex is her way of saying hello."

Now, admit it: Doesn't that feel better than your average American handshake? ●

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SEASON'S SCREENINGS

Mrs. Doubtfire

Schindler's List

This is the season to be ....serious. With the exception of three parts deux ("Wayne's World," "Beethoven," "Sister Act"), December's the month when Hollywood's biggest stars make their final bids for Oscardom with darker, more solemn fare. Search hard enough, though, and you'll find a dash of holiday cheer; the Robin Williams and Nicholas Cage vehicles are *not* tearjerkers. Thank god for small favors.

"Mrs. Doubtfire" — Starring Robin Williams and Sally Field. Williams plays a man posing as a 65-year-old English housekeeper so that he can care for his kids, whom he lost in a custody battle with his ex-wife. Will Williams wear a dress to the Academy Awards?

"Geronimo" — Starring Jason Patric, Robert Duvall, Gene Hackman and Wes Studi. Directed by Walter Hill. The saga of the Apache leader who opposed the ghettoizing of Native Americans on reservations and was thus rewarded by a humiliating capture and imprisonment by the American government.

"Heaven and Earth"— Starring Tommy Lee Jones and Hiep Thi Le. Director Oliver Stone presents the flipside of "Platoon" — Vietnam from a Vietnamese woman's POV. Stone on Vietnam? His past record speaks for itself. Stone on women? Hopefully his past record doesn't.

"Intersection" — Starring Richard Gere, Sharon Stone and Lolita Davidovich. As his vintage Mercedes skids into a crowded intersection, a successful architect sees his life and his loves (wife Stone and lover Davidovich) flash before his eyes. How hard is it to come out of a coma with those two women waiting on the other end?

"What's Eating Gilbert Grape" — Starring Johnny Depp, Juliette Lewis and Mary Steenburgen. Twenty-four-year-old Gilbert longs for escape from his family, but in the meantime he's the one stuck taking care of his 500-pound mother, retarded brother and two unhappy sisters.

"Guarding Tess" — Starring Nicholas Cage and Shirley MacLaine. A comedy about a Secret Service agent assigned to protect an ex-First Lady. Closer in tone to "Driving Miss Daisy" than "In the Line of Fire."

"Schindler's List" — Starring Liam Neeson and Ben Kingsley. Directed by Steven Spielberg. This three-hour drama shot in documentary black-and-white style tells the story of Oskar Schindler, a factory owner in Poland during WWII who managed to save his 1,200 Jewish workers from Nazi executioners. Call it "The Color Black-and-White."

A Perfect World

The Pelican Brief

"The Pelican Brief" — Starring Julia Roberts and Denzel Washington. As a Tulane law student, Roberts uncovers a conspiracy to murder two Supreme Court justices and gamely fights for truth, justice and the American way.

"Beethoven's 2nd" — Starring Charles Grodin and Bonnie Hunt. Beethoven falls in love.

"A Perfect World" — Starring Clint Eastwood, Kevin Costner and Laura Dern. Directed by Clint Eastwood. A drama about a Texas Ranger (Eastwood) hunting down an escaped convict kidnapper (Costner). Testosterone central.

"Philadelphia" — Starring Tom Hanks, Denzel Washington. Directed by Jonathan Demme. Hanks plays a gay lawyer who's fired after he's diagnosed with AIDS and then hires a homophobic attorney (Washington) to represent him.

"Sister Act 2" — Starring Whoopi Goldberg and Kathy Najimy. Vegas lounge singer Deloris Van Cartier and her nun pals stage a musical competition among school kids.

"Snake Eyes" — Starring Madonna and Harvey Keitel. A Hollywood drama about a director with marital woes (Keitel) who is making a film about marital woes. Two questions: Is this what they call an existential high concept? Will Madonna ever learn?

"Wayne's World 2" — Starring Mike Myers, Dana Carvey and Tia Carrere. The return of the Schwing Kids and the bash of the decade: Waynestock. ●

THAT'S TOO MUCH ENTERTAINMENT

Nintendo-shmendo (above) & Little Rascals on the wagon (below).

Remember freeze tag? Red rover? Stickball? Congratulations. You are part of a dying breed, a member of the last generation to remember games that required no technology, just gangs of kids and a vacant lot far from traffic and interfering grown-ups.

Kids don't go outside and play anymore. Those empty summer hours begging to be filled with spontaneous play no longer exist. No fungo. No saloogie. No monkeys-in-the-middle.

Where are the kids? Inside, playing Nintendo. In fact, more Americans have a Nintendo Entertainment System than indoor plumbing, proof that Americans would rather play video games than have a warm place to shit.

How have the Japanese managed to take over our kids' minds? It's simple. Take a boy of seven, give him absolute power over a computer universe where he can battle monsters, rescue a princess and conquer outer space, and playing kick the can is not going to be very appealing.

Oh, I can hear the whimpering and whining now: "But Nintendo teaches kids about computers." Yeah, like Operation taught me how to be a brain surgeon. "It's good for their hand-eye coordination." Right. My best friend's six-year-old can't tie his own shoes, but he's mastered all 99 levels of Super Tiny Street Fighting Ninja Brothers IX.

Maybe my biggest problem is with the name: It's not called the Nintendo Mind Control System, as it should be, it's called the Nintendo *Entertainment* System. Who could object to harmless entertainment?

Me. Entertainment is, by nature, passive: All you have to do is flip a switch, turn a knob or drag your ass down to the movie theater. Being a kid should be about doing, not watching. Childhood should include the frustrations of being picked last for a team, falling out of a tree or getting hit in the face with a ball, not losing your mushroom while crossing the Cheese Bridge.

Adults are certainly not immune to mindless pleasures. But whenever someone says to me, "You know, I enjoy playing Mario just as much as little Max, here," I feel as if he had confessed to enjoying picking his nose and eating it.

The craving for entertainment is insidious. Even the once respectable Los Angeles Times recently promoted itself as "The Source of Summer Fun." Fun? Since when is a newspaper supposed to be fun? Beetle Bailey isn't enough?

Of course, L.A. is the front-runner in the great national search for entetainment. And from those consummate purveyors of entertainment, Universal Studios, came this revolutionary concept in fun: *a walk down the street*. CityWalk at Universal Studios, Hollywood, is an entertainment corporation's idea of a city street: an outdoor mall of restaurants and toy stores anchored by a 20-plex movie theater. After you see *Weekend at Bernie's II* for the fifth time, you can stroll past 50-foot neon signs, a fraudulent lighthouse, animatronic murals and a free-form fountain programmed to attack as you pass by. Big, loud, crowded and bright, CityWalk is like being *inside* of a video game. Of course, this being L.A., you can't *walk* to CityWalk; even if all you want is to get splashed in the face, you've got to pay $5 to park. But hey, if it were free, how would you know you were being entertained?

And then, of course, there's CD-ROM. People who wouldn't set foot in the Smithsonian (lackluster gift store, no World of Food Court) can roam blissfully through the electronic halls of the museum on laser disc without leaving their Barfolounger or absorbing one iota of meaning.

Take a reality check, America. Turn off your TVs. Go for a walk. Teach a kid you know how to play skelly, running bases or fox and hounds. Oh, and while you're at it, hit him in the face with a ball for me.

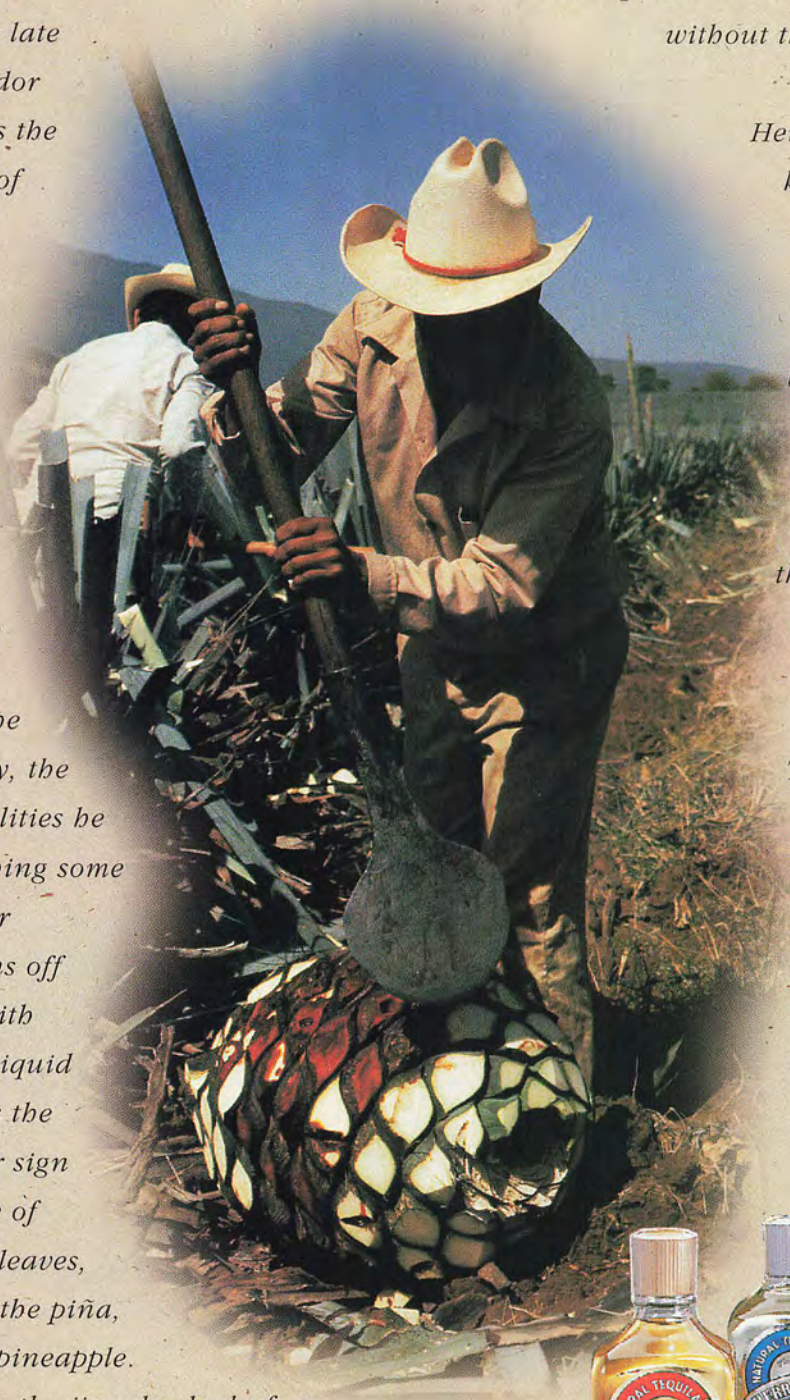
—Gretna Green ●

Select only the Best

Straw hat pulled low to shade his eyes from the late morning sun, the jimador (agave harvester) scans the seemingly endless row of blue agave plants. His discerning eye is looking for just the right plant. It must be mature, fully grown and completely ripe, or it will be passed over in his search for perfection.

Leaves brown near the base signaling maturity, the fifth agave has the qualities he seeks. It is huge, weighing some seventy kilos. Coa razor sharp, the jimador trims off the long spiny leaves with practiced strokes. Red liquid oozes from the plant as the agave "bleeds", another sign it has reached the peak of maturity. Shorn of its leaves, the heart of the agave, the piña, resembles a very large pineapple.

This agave harvested, the jimador looks for the next perfect specimen. A smile breaks across his weathered face as he spies a selection even more magnificent than the last.



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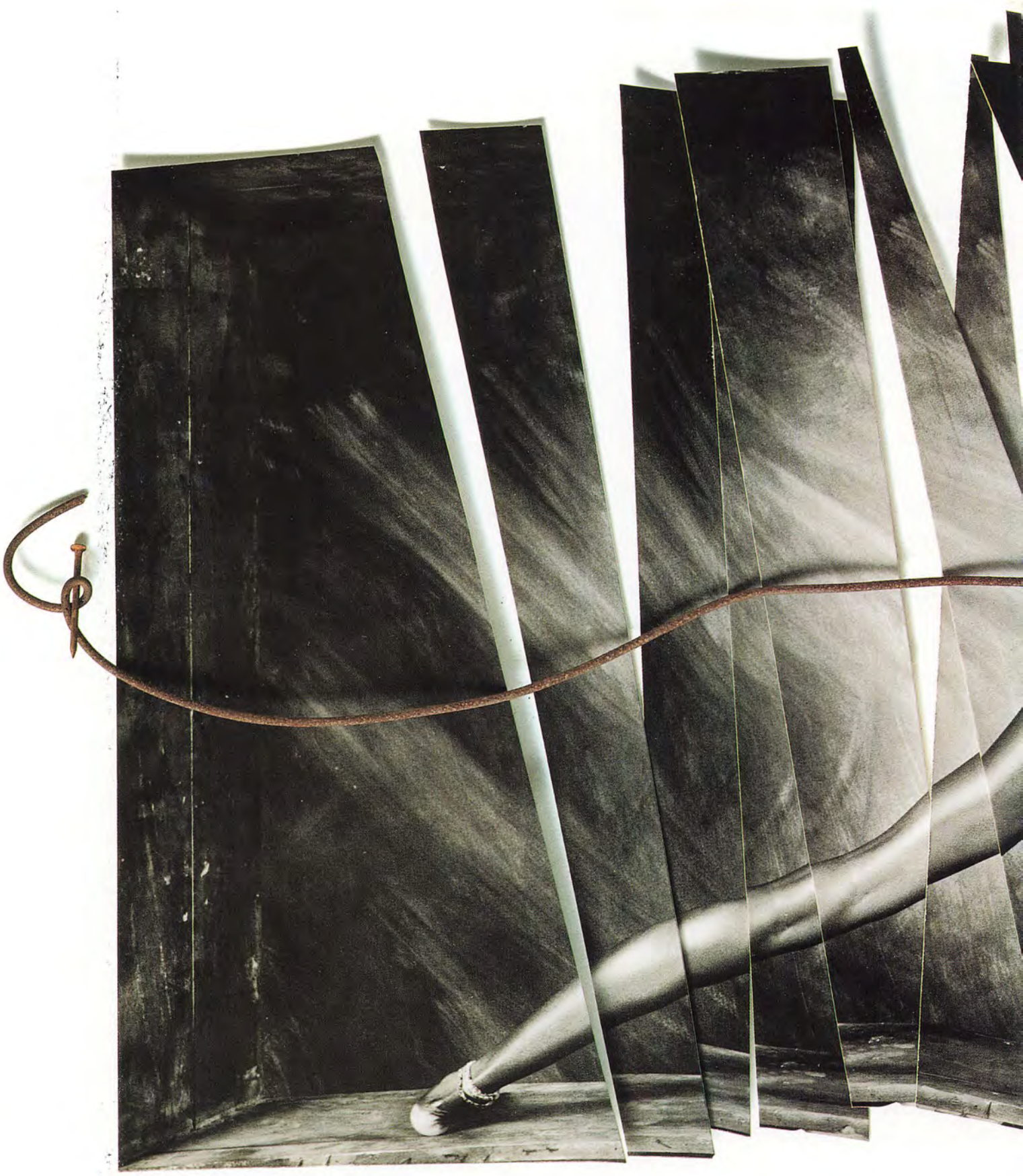

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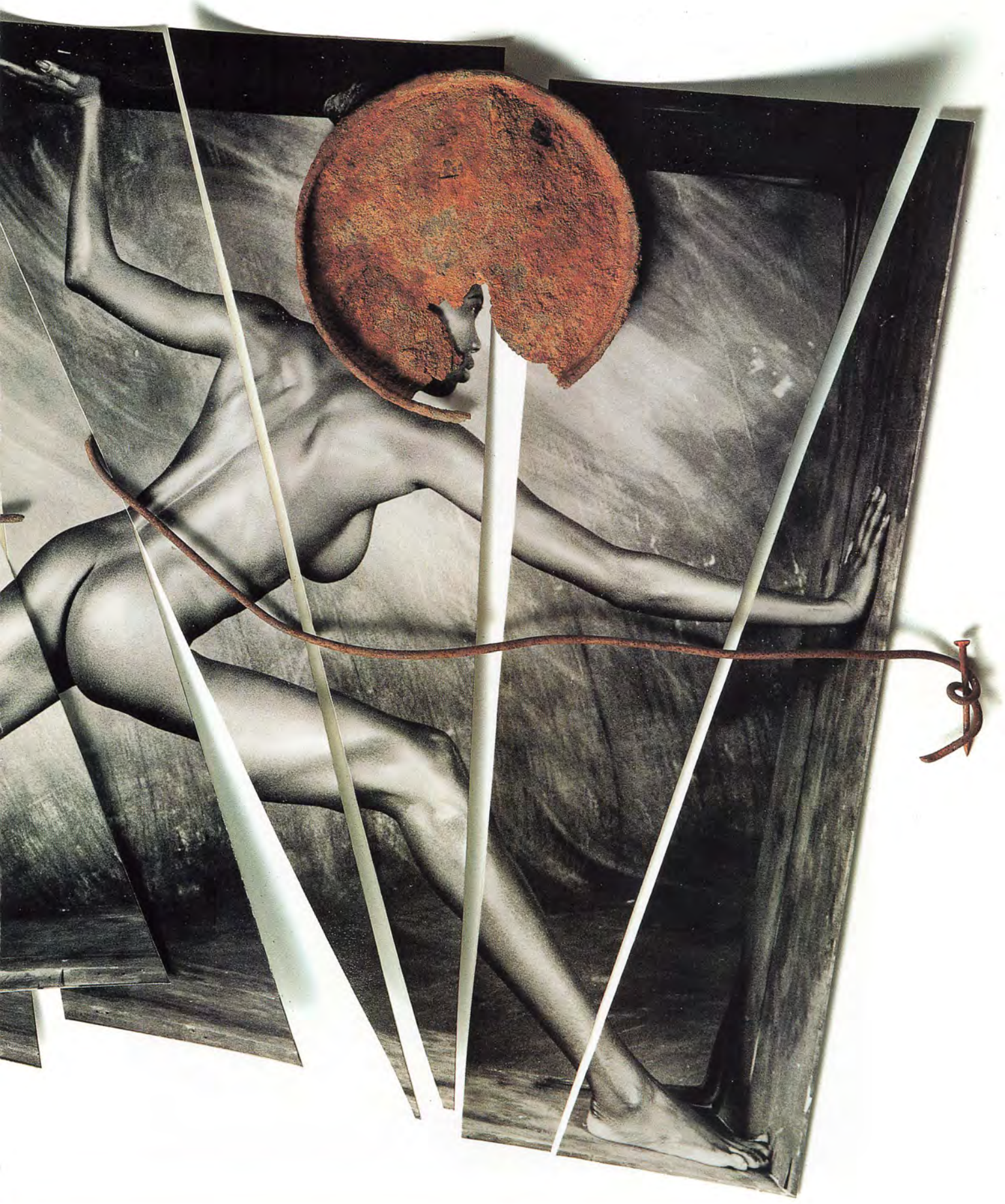

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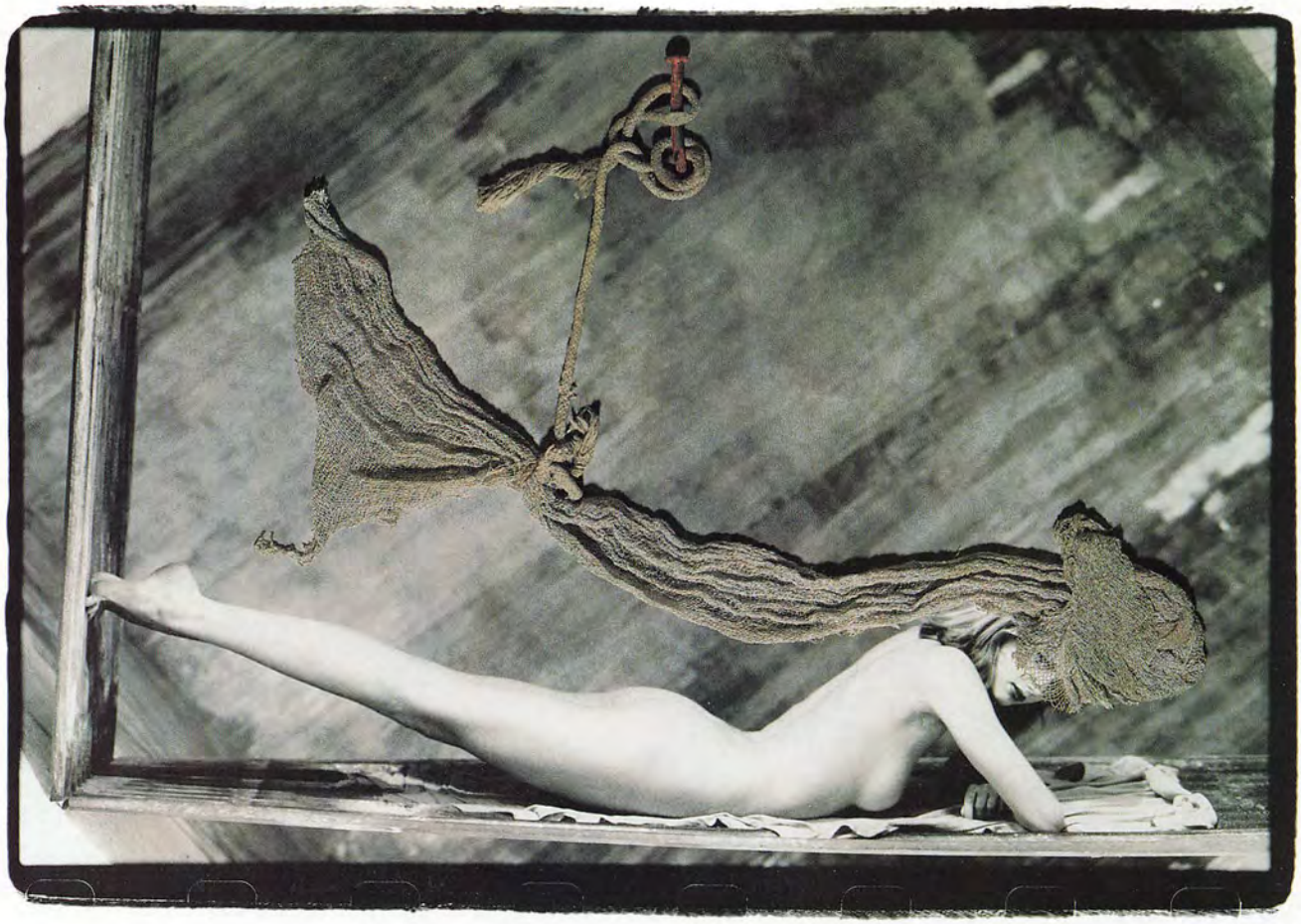

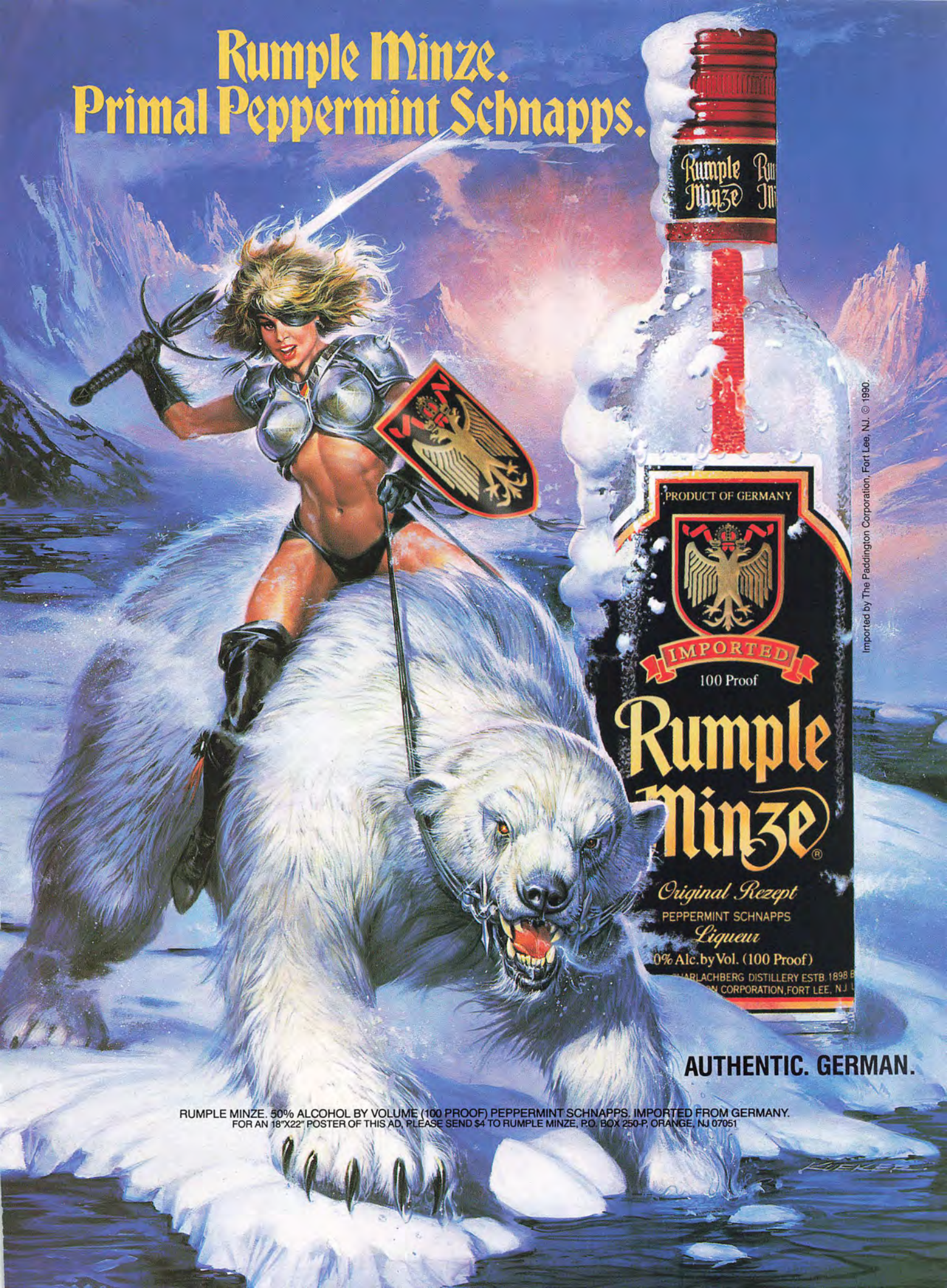
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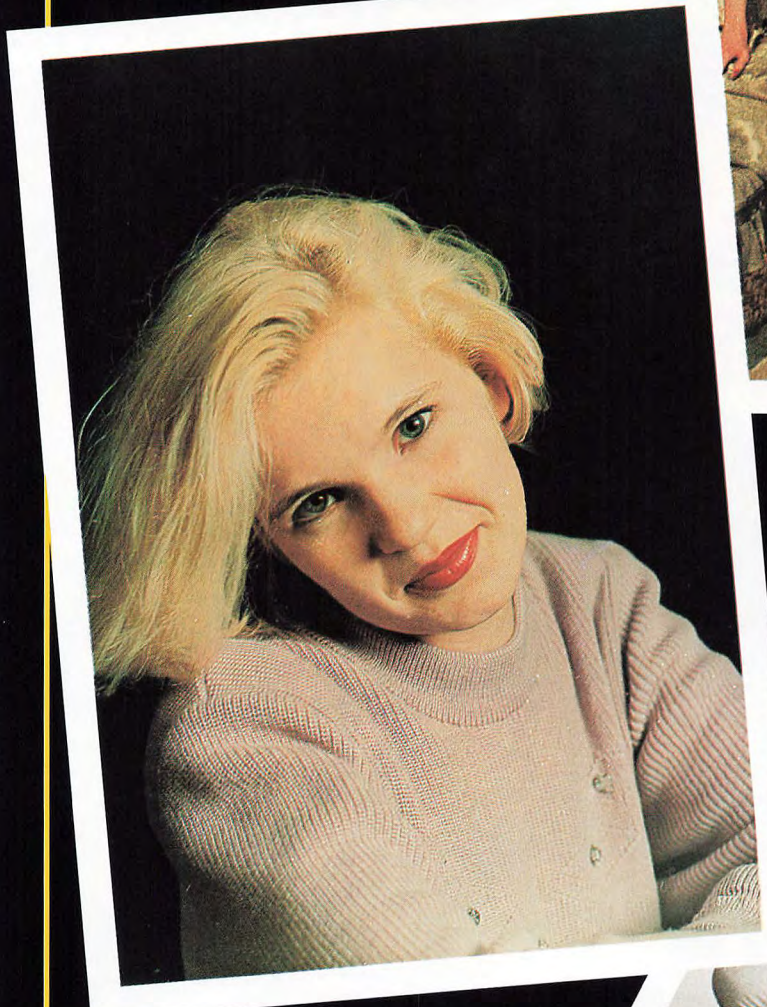


If Ukraine girls really knock you out, rejoice. Mail-order brides are fast becoming Russia's leading export.

HERE COME THE BRIDESKI'S

BY ADAM PARFREY

Believe it or not, David Greenspan's fly is unzipped as he greets me in the doorway of his Orange County, California townhouse. After he finishes zipping up, he regales me with stories of his exotic exploits with a Russian lady visitor whom he claims is now spending a month in the states as his personal "sex slave." We go inside and I hear shrieks emanating from an upstairs bedroom; the girl is watching a horror movie on television.

The gold rush is on, and Greenspan, a computer executive, is not too eager to let anyone in on his grubstake. "Maybe I shouldn't be talking to you," he says. "When there's a buyer's market, you don't want a lot of competition for the goods. All our gorgeous American women wouldn't give me a shot. Not so the Russian ladies. I'm anxious to get over there and get (my contract for this woman) signed, sealed, delivered before it becomes too well known."

As he makes himself comfortable on his living room couch, Greenspan explains, "We spoil women in this country. The women all are looking for their superman, so to speak. They see TV, they see Kevin Costner, they see heroes there. It gets harder and harder for men to compete. The thing about this country, even if the women look and act like Gravel Gerties they'll still make demands."

Mail-order brides were a thriving business in the wild west, when women rarely made it over the Rockies. Today's transcontinental matchmaking services use the "pen pal" euphemism to flog pictures and addresses of exotic women anxious for a one-way ticket out of Third World hell.

The Philippines, Thailand and Mexico have been the traditional fount for marriage-minded, America-bound females, but a new wrinkle in the foreign bride market began in earnest in 1990, when *Glasnost* pierced escape holes in the once-impenetrable Iron Curtain.

Nakhoda (translation: "Godsend") is a Moscow-based agency that sends photos and vital statistics of aspiring emigrants to stateside businesses like

Holmes warns that a Russian bride should never be allowed to shop alone or she'll throw everything she can grab into the cart.

Scanna International, which sells North American men spiral bound booklets displaying the exotic merchandise. In the Scanna catalogues, page after Xeroxed page of dark-eyed nubiles stare uncertainly at the hope of a better life.

"I had a penchant for Scandinavian women," Greenspan admits. "So, I subscribed to Scanna. But looking through the books, some of the Eastern Europeans caught my eye. I found that, of all the countries they were promoting, the best women were from Russia. It's none of this like in America, where a woman tells you what she likes. She wants to travel all over the world, know what kind of car you have and if you like fine dining."

Scanna was founded in 1980 by Danish émigré Marie Helbog, who primarily arranged Scandinavian-American matches. In recent years, however, the most fecund female resource has become Russia and Eastern Europe.

Scanna employee Chris Ensor says the highest demand for Russian women seems to come from Alaska ("Siberian women are used to being cold"), Dallas ("Members complain about the plastic people down there; that they can't find a down-home kind of girl"), and Southern California ("I suppose it's easy to get lonely driving the freeways"). For a while, the deluge of Russian women forced weekly production of a booklet containing 200 women. It's now slowed to a booklet every other week.

But getting the women within kissing distance isn't always that easy. According to San Diego immigration attorney Larry Holmes, it's almost impossible to get Russian women to the U.S. on a traveler's visa. "Only about one out of 20 can get over that way. It's a real crapshoot." The only real alternative is to travel to Russia, meet the girls there, choose your mate and file for a fiancee visa, which requires four months to process.

Holmes warns that once a Russian woman arrives in the U.S., she should never be allowed to shop alone, or she'll throw everything she can grab into the shopping cart without regard to necessity, size, or price. "It's not that they're greedy. By reflex, the gal was hoarding because she thought the stuff wouldn't have been there even a few minutes later."

Holmes' Russian immigration business has really taken off the past year, since he handles referrals from Scanna International and American Russian Matchmaking, a Studio City-based company that arranges tours to the Motherland, where American men are set upon by hordes of desperate foreign females at banquets and parties.

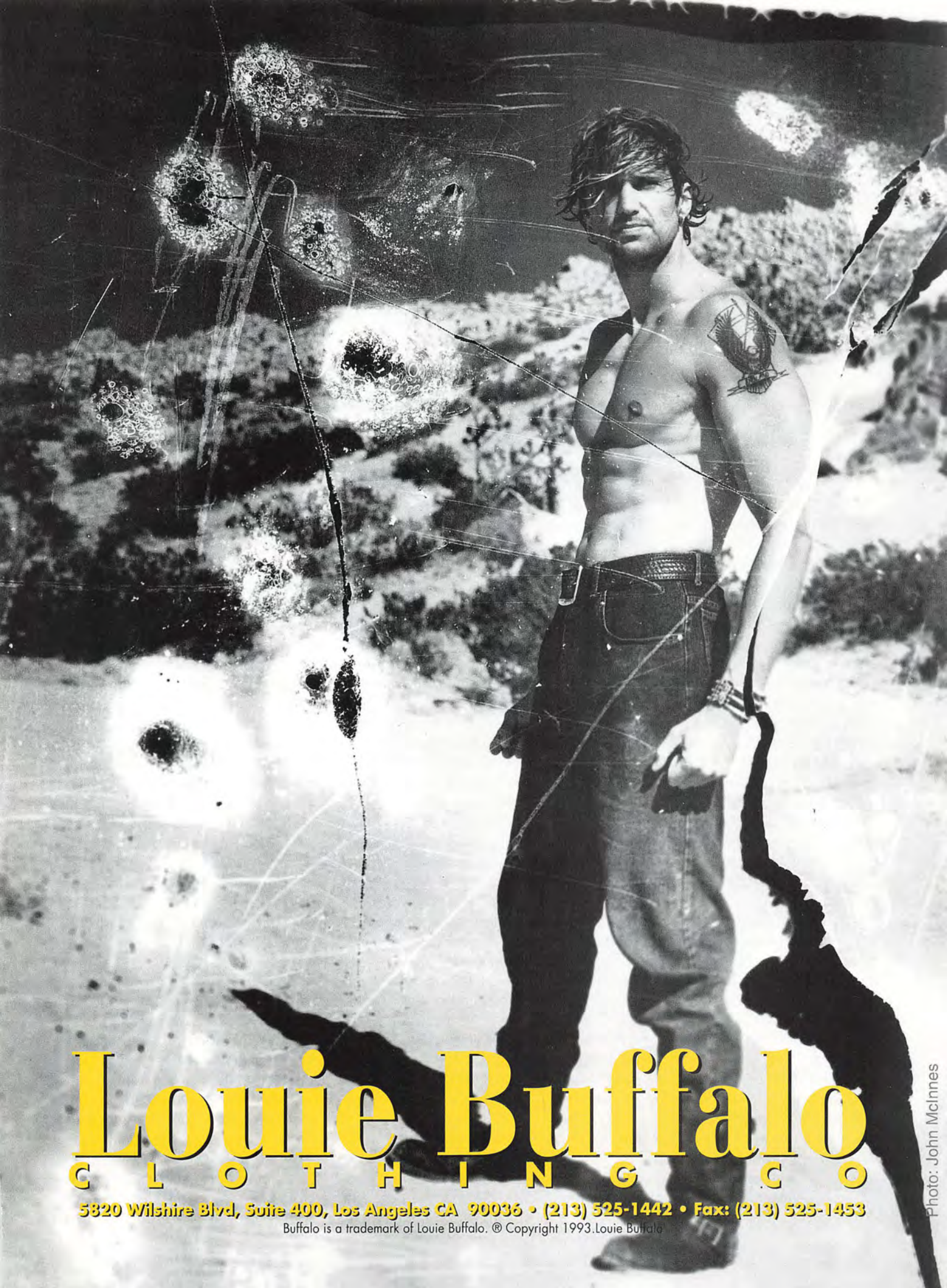
"Sometimes a guy will go to that first meeting (in Russia) and it goes to his head," says Holmes. "He'll go out on 20 dates and think he's a rock star."

Holmes went over to Russia on immigration business and returned with a woman. "The first meeting I got to, there were about 75 women there. I stared from right to left with my mouth hanging open. The women were all so beautiful. And way in the corner there's a girl, she looks just like Brooke Shields. And she said, in English, 'Are you very tired?' I invited her to dinner, and we've been together ever since."

The lure of the male-order bride is so strong that even the best laid plans of avowed bachelors fall by the wayside. "Ron Rollband, of American Russian Matchmaking, was the Hugh Hefner of the industry," admits Holmes. "Now, he's getting married. He once said to me, 'If I ever get married, take out a gun and shoot me.'"

The fallen, 57-year-old Rollband is one of those energetic entrepreneurs who seems to enjoy selling you something. The gist of his matchmaking pitch is this: "If a guy finds a wife through me there are three things I guarantee him. She's going to be younger, she's going to be prettier and she's going to be far better educated than her Western counterpart."

Every man who signs up for a tour to Moscow with American Russian Matchmaking is obliged to sign a contract stipulating a $3,000 payment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"When you put it up against what you spend for a car, a lifetime mate seems a bargain by comparison."

to Rollband "after a client has found a suitable mate and married them." The fee does not include tour, attorney and correspondence expenses. "We realize $3,000 is a substantial sum," says Rollband, "but when you put it up against what you spend for a car, a lifetime mate seems a bargain by comparison."

Rollband delights in showing visitors the videos he shot of his fiancee, Lydia, an innocent-looking young girl with big eyes and bee-stung lips. "Look at that face!" he says. "If you looked up 'pig heaven' in the encyclopedia, this would be it!"

"I have been very fortunate in my lifetime where women are concerned," gloats Rollband, "then I meet this little blonde and she torpedoes me with six direct hits. I sank immediately. She's a doctor at 23. She's got the warmest personality you will ever encounter. Like she fell off a Christmas card. You say, why is she going to marry this fat old guy? It doesn't make any sense. So I'm marrying her in anticipation of losing her. Why would I want to heap that kind of misery on myself? Because obviously this is going to be better than a puppy."

While the Russian market booms, the call for over-the-counter Asian lovelies is growing for a number of equally obvious reasons.

The generation or racial gap, which might seem insurmountable in America, doesn't concern Asian women any more than it concerns their Russian counterparts. "It's not uncommon for a 16-year-old Filipino girl to marry a 50-year-old man," says Rusty Neal, a stockbroker and client of Pacific Island Ladies, a Los Angeles-based pen pal service that supplies catalogues of personal want-ads and addresses of Filipino, Malaysian and Indonesian beauties.

Neal, who says he is besieged by a constant supply of blue-eyed blondes finds his aesthetic ideal in Asian women. "I'm Muslim, so I don't smoke and I don't drink. My only vice is women.

"The myth about the submissive Asian woman is bullshit. If she's mad at you, the American woman will push you off a bridge, but an Asian woman will make you think you're the strongest man alive if you jump off that bridge. The result is the same, only the method is different."

The cultural differences between Asian countries can be vast. "You've got to remember," says Neal, "(Filipinos) have a colonized mentality. Their vision of America is the soldiers, who were, let's face it, a bunch of drunken morons, the quintessential Ugly Americans."

Why then, are Filipino women so bent on coming to America?

"They'd rather be abused and get three meals a day than be poor and stuck in a Third World country, explains Neal. "Their men are macho, always screwing around. It's a sex-positive culture. You'd have to be deaf, dumb and blind not to get laid in the Philippines.

"Indonesia on the other hand is 90 percent Muslim, and they're more apt to invite you into their houses. If you're planning to marry a Muslim girl be prepared to convert.

"The Chinese don't talk to anybody else unless they're Chinese. Hong Kong is not the place to meet girls. But Tokyo is a blast. The club scene is amazing, the girls are incredible."

You can't say that Frank Barton of Pacific Island Ladies doesn't believe in his work. He met his business partner and wife, Evelyn, on a trip to the Philippines. "I was there to meet Evelyn's sister, who I corresponded with, but it turned out that she got married. It was all for the best. Evelyn was younger and prettier."

Apparently the trend to acquire a mail-order bride hasn't even begun to peak. Most of the men I spoke with who had indulged in these match-making services appeared satisfied with their choices. They concur with Frank Barton that, "American men are completely fed up with American women. They want women who are more dedicated to their happiness." A backlash to American feminism, one might say, that even Susan Faludi never anticipated. ●

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YEAR O
DRAG

CRYSTAL BERNARD OF TV'S "WINGS"

OLYMPIAN MARY LOU RETTON

OF THE
GGIN'

IT'S NEVER REALLY GONE AWAY, BUT DRAG RACING'S BACK AND BREAKING OUT BIG. NOW EVEN WOMEN ARE FLEXING THEIR MUSCLE CARS.

"THIS GUY LOST CONTROL AND SPUN OUT AND HIT A WALL. WE DIALED 911. THEN WE TOOK OFF. I DON'T KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM AFTER THAT."

The scene is straight out of "Grease." Or "Happy Days." The street-lit parking lot at the hamburger stand, jammed with cars, drivers and bystanders. Owners of Camaros and GTOs flash their cars' hot-shot exteriors; buffed, waxed and intricately detailed.

A guy in a purple shirt is in the process of setting up a race between a nerdy-looking guy in a button-down shirt and the owner of a GTX. Both cars have funky-looking, sanded chassis, gutted interiors and fat black tires. But it's what's under the hood that counts here tonight. Button-down squats behind the GTX, sizing her up. Purple shirt reassures him. "That GTX is nothing," he says. "She's got nothing."

Suddenly, the collective energy shifts to a frantic display of muscle. The onlookers hurry to their cars and patch out. Destination: A deserted industrial street one mile up the road, where the participants and spectators park, kill their lights and wait breathlessly.

A minute later Button-down's rod and the GTX come around the corner and take up their positions at the starting line, which is black with the rubber from countless races. Some guy steps between them, signals...and they're off, tires smokin', pistons straining. They rip through the block in a matter of seconds, stopping just short of the busy boulevard which marks the end of the makeshift track. But the return is spoiled. Someone tipped off the cops. The entire group roars off into the night.

Drag racing's always been popular. In fact, the National Hot Rod Association [NHRA] sanctions three "Professional"and nine "Sportsman" categories. The class that enjoys the widest popularity is the nitromethane-fueled Top Fuel dragsters because they're the fastest, but a trip to the strip reveals endless possibilities. High-performance motorcycles whine like angry electric insects, 18-wheel semis stampede like runaway dinosaurs. And 800+ cubic inch "mountain motor pro stocks" send young children screaming and holding their ears. There are limousine races, nostalgia hot rods, fire trucks vs. police cars. You name it and some drag stag or drag hag has raced it.

The sport was revitalized in the 1980s with TV coverage of cars exceeding 250 mph and dramatic crashes like that of motorsports Hall of Famer Shirley Muldowney sent drag racing crashing into the national psyche. But in '93, the hot drag news is coming from the streets, where non-sanctioned drag outlaws ignorant of — or perhaps attracted to — the possibility of getting caught or killed, are making names for themselves. From abandoned piers along New York's Hudson River, to industrial suburbs of Los Angeles, people are racing just about anything that moves.

Among the spectators and drivers at recent LACR races in Palmdale, California were (clockwise from top): Heather Thomas, Jay Leno, Lady & Lord Wigand and Wildgirl.

And while professional dragsters and race officials distance themselves from street racing [although many of them started out there themselves], the high profile of the outlaw racers is partly responsible for the surge in drag fever.

"There's just something about the street," says Carlos, a street racer from Arcadia, Ca. "The car's shaking. It's a little scary. I've kind of cooled out on it since I saw an accident. This guy lost control and spun out and hit a wall. When we got up to him the roof was all squashed in and he was bloody and unconscious. We dialed 911. Then we took off. I don't know what happened to him after that."

"The street's for fools," maintains Carol Niemietz, who drives Pontiac stock categories. Besides, the cops are much tougher now and drag racing tickets are now $300 a pop."

D.C., a street racer, agrees. "I used to street race like a motherfucker, but the Highway Patrol and Sheriffs don't even let you congregate now. They know the spots and as soon as you drive up, they're on you."

Meanwhile, back at the Happy Days burger shack, negotiations resume. A blonde, Sharon Stone clone in a souped-up Trans Am checks out her competition, an old Z28, like the one Paul Newman dropped twin Vet engines into. It will go on like this all night.

And while street racing is big news, the bigger news is women. Girls are everywhere. Superstars like former Olympic Gold Medal winner Mary Lou Retton and TV's Crystal Bernard ["Wings"] are racing professionally. And there's a whole new wave of heroines led by Erika Peterson, aka "Wildgirl."

That drag racing holds a major attraction for women doesn't surprise Wildgirl, a stunning redhead with a model's body and a rock star's fashion sense. "The car is the equalizer," she says. "You can be any race, sex, age, and you can still compete and win. I can't think of any other sport where that's true, except maybe pinball." Host of a weekly New Jersey radio show, "Rockin' Racing," Wildgirl races a '74 Plymouth Valiant and is currently in her seventh year of promoting auto sports. She says that she considers herself an "auto sports evangelist because I firmly believe that when somebody who has never been goes to the track they will be converted."

A trip to the strip [or the right street at night] bears her out. Karen Ciruso drives a Top Alcohol Dragster [the top class of Sportsman category] dubbed "Code 3 Karen" in honor of her previous career as police dispatcher. She often ends up matched against Heather Sanders, whose husband Bob wrenches their car, but leaves the driving to his wife. "Almost five g's when you accelerate out of the starting line, six to seven g's when the chutes open," says Bob. "You're accelerating from zero to 60 in less than a second. Driving like this is Mr. Toad's Wild Ride at Disneyland. It's like drugs, only legal."

Still, the sport is mostly male and the women-as-ornament attitudes were still widely in evidence at one recent L.A. event where, according to raceway announcer John Nickle, "One of the primary things is to come out to the track on hot days and watch all the half-naked women."

No day at the races is complete without the requisite bikini contest. That day, the only one actually wearing a bikini was a well-endowed blonde who privately admitted that she was only 15 and kept asking hopefully if she could be hosed down first. She wasn't.

But, on the whole, the scene is less about looks, and more focused on expertise with cars and having the right attitude. Although drag racing is the hot sport of the minute for beautiful women and celebrities like Tom Cruise, Paul Newman and "In Living Colour's" David Allen Grier, it remains mostly poser-free and proud of it.

"It just doesn't make sense to me that people who are into glitzy, glamorous, superficial kind of stuff would enjoy sweating, getting burned rubber on their faces and breathing nitrometh-

Lingua Draga

BURN OUT — Not a drug casualty, but the revving smoking manuever drivers do just before pulling up to the starting line. It heats up the racing slicks and gets them sticky for better traction.
SLICKS — Big treadless racing tires, not street legal.
DIAL-IN — The anticipated ET for a car, the time is then posted on the windshield and logged in before the race.
BREAK OUT — When a driver goes faster than his/her dial-in.
BRACKET RACING — A race in which any two cars can race each other, their start times staggered according to their posted dial-ins. The winner is the one who reaches the finish line first without breaking out.
RED-LIGHT — When a driver starts his race before the green "go" signal.
HEADS-UP — A race where both cars start on the same starting line.
ET — Forget the Extra-Terrestrial. In drag racing, ET means the elapsed time from the starting line to the finish line.
DOOR-SLAMMERS — Factory model [un-modified] stock cars.
FLAME-JOB — Custom paint job featuring flames streaming from the front end.
NITROUS — Nitrous-oxide, usually hidden from view, and injected into the engine during a race. It causes radical acceleration and can shave one to two seconds off a driver's time.
WRENCH — Anyone who repairs or builds a car, from a crew chief to a mechanic.
BOWTIE — Chevy.

"THE CORVETTE [WAS] WRECKED AND THE POLICE WERE ON THE WAY. A BUNCH OF GUYS JUST PICKED IT UP AND PUT IT ON A FLATBED AND TOOK OFF WITH IT."

ane," says Wildgirl. "Most of us aren't fashion victims by any means."

Of course that sentiment goes double for the street racers. "It's kind of a scary scene," says Wildgirl of the weekly street racing on an access road by New York's JFK Airport. "They'll bet big money and there's all these different gangs, the Italians, the Chinese, the postal workers. There's actually this one guy called the Mailman and he has a bottle-fed Grand National, but it looks real street, looks really like a sleeper. I've heard stories from out there like when a purple Corvette wrecked and the police were on their way. The guy was still in the car and a bunch of guys just picked it right up and put it on a flatbed and took off with it."

But, as drag racing makes more noise [and more money], dragsters like Kenny Bernstein might have the right point. "Not many people think they want to get out there and go 300 mph," he says. "But after you see it you're going to be tempted to give it a try."

Bernstein, whose son works on the crew during summers when he isn't in school sees drag racing as a "family activity, because there are so many classes of car that anybody can race."

It appears that a lot of the women racers caught the fever from fathers, brothers or husbands who were mechanics. Husbands frequently wrench for their wives and when the men drive, their wives or girlfriends are by their sides. The pits at the track look like family picnics. Even on the street, the parking lots and staging areas are filled with children and pets.

"It's this multi-generation thing now. The guys that were racing in the 1950s are in their 60s now," Wildgirl observes. "They still appreciate the noise, smoke and the fire."

Los Angeles County Raceway Track Manager Bernie Longjohn's son is a driver and often brings his grandson Blaine to the track. Bernie operates the California Drag Racing School, and this year he's added a whole separate school for kids, to prepare the next generation, for the NHRA's newest category: Junior Dragster, for children aged eight to16.

The prospect of a Second Grader traveling at 80 mph might scare a lot of people, but dragsters accept that danger goes with the territory. Danger is part of the myth and mystique of the sport. It's not everybody's weekend activity, but it easily could be. Like Wildgirl says, "You don't need to have a lot of money; you just need a car, a driver's license, and a helmet... and good reaction time." ●

Photos, clockwise from top: Paul Newman stands heads above the competition; MTV sportscaster Dan Cortese talks time trials; and Bob Golic prepares to pop the clutch.

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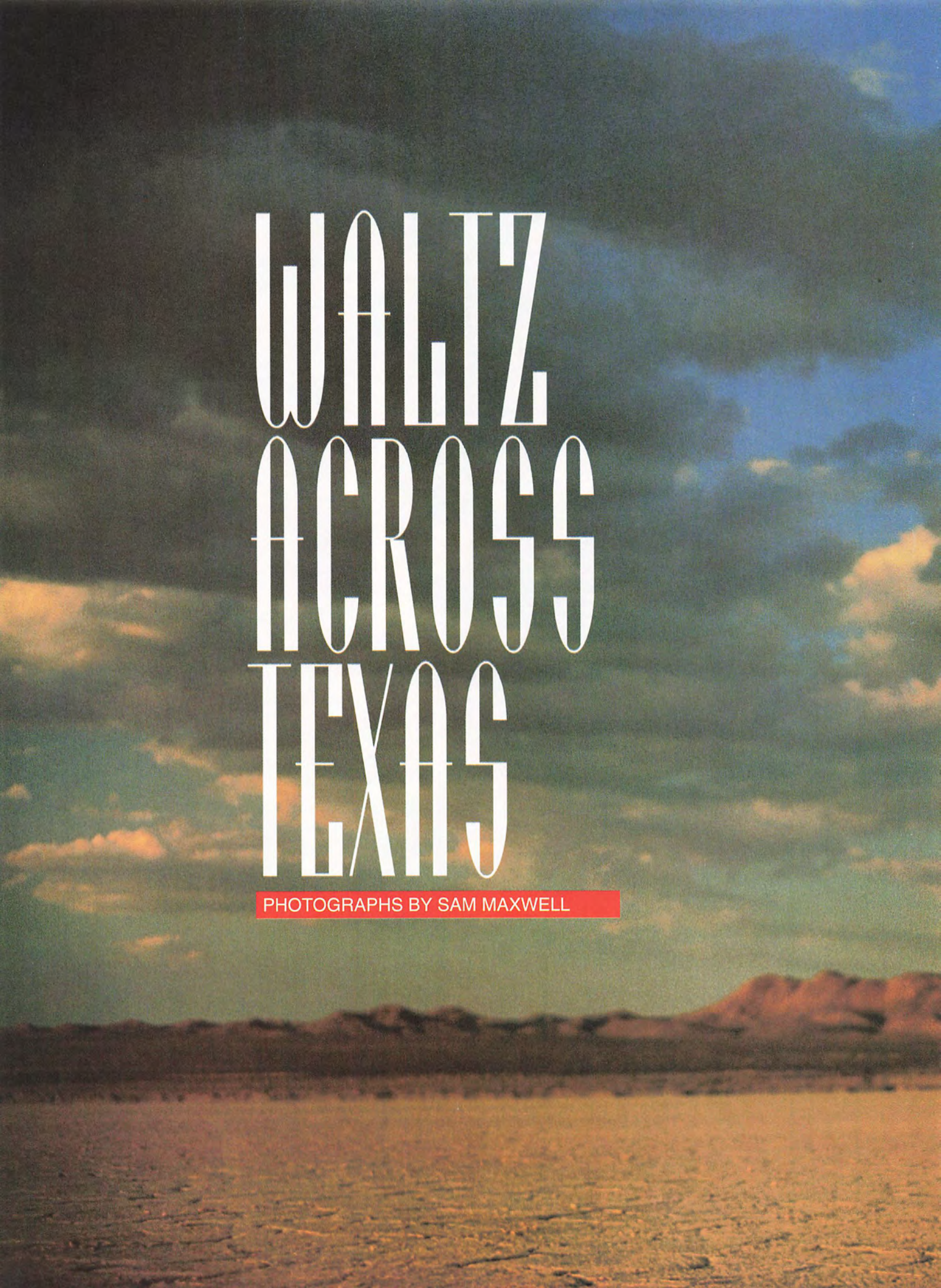

WALTZ ACROSS TEXAS

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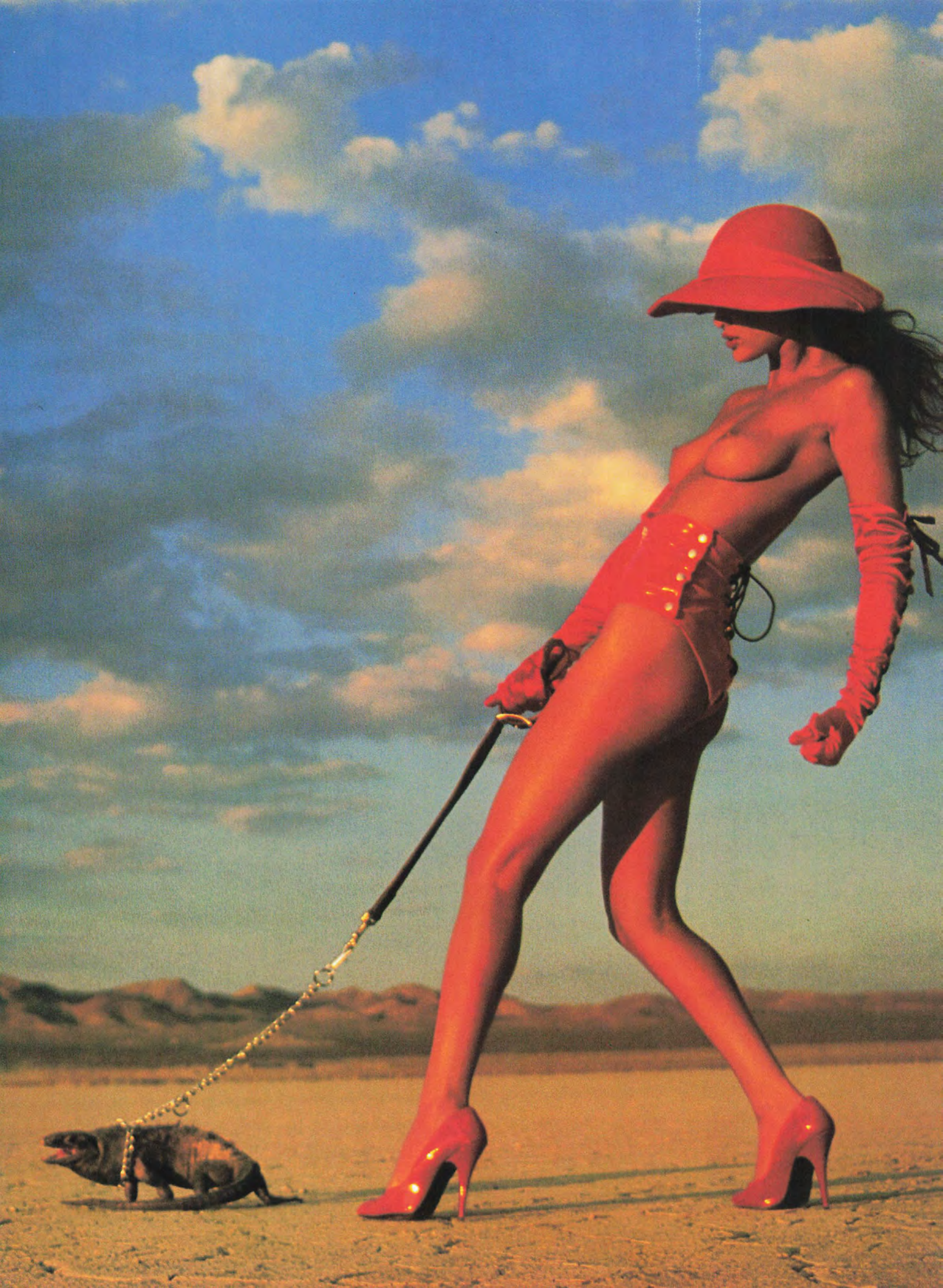

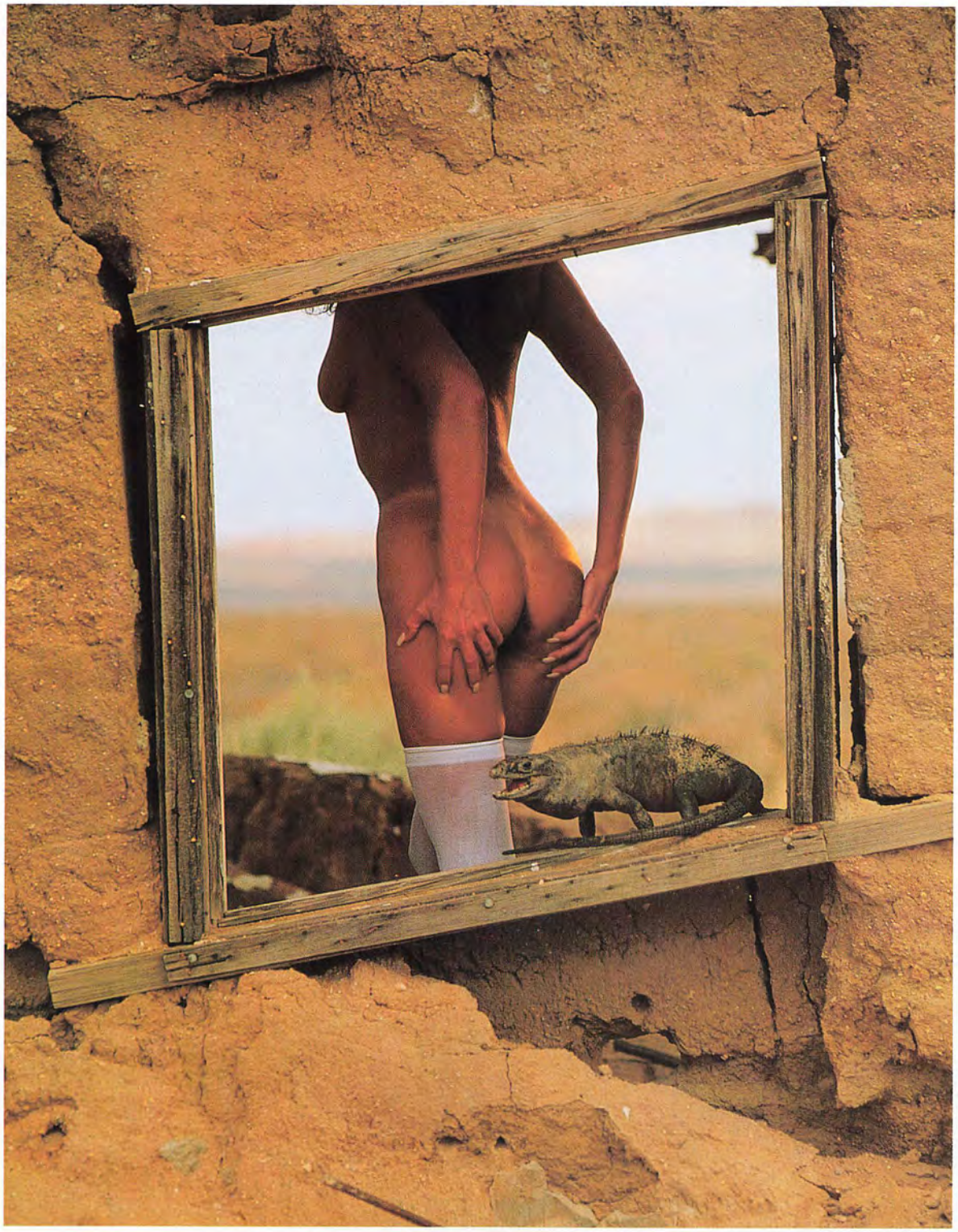

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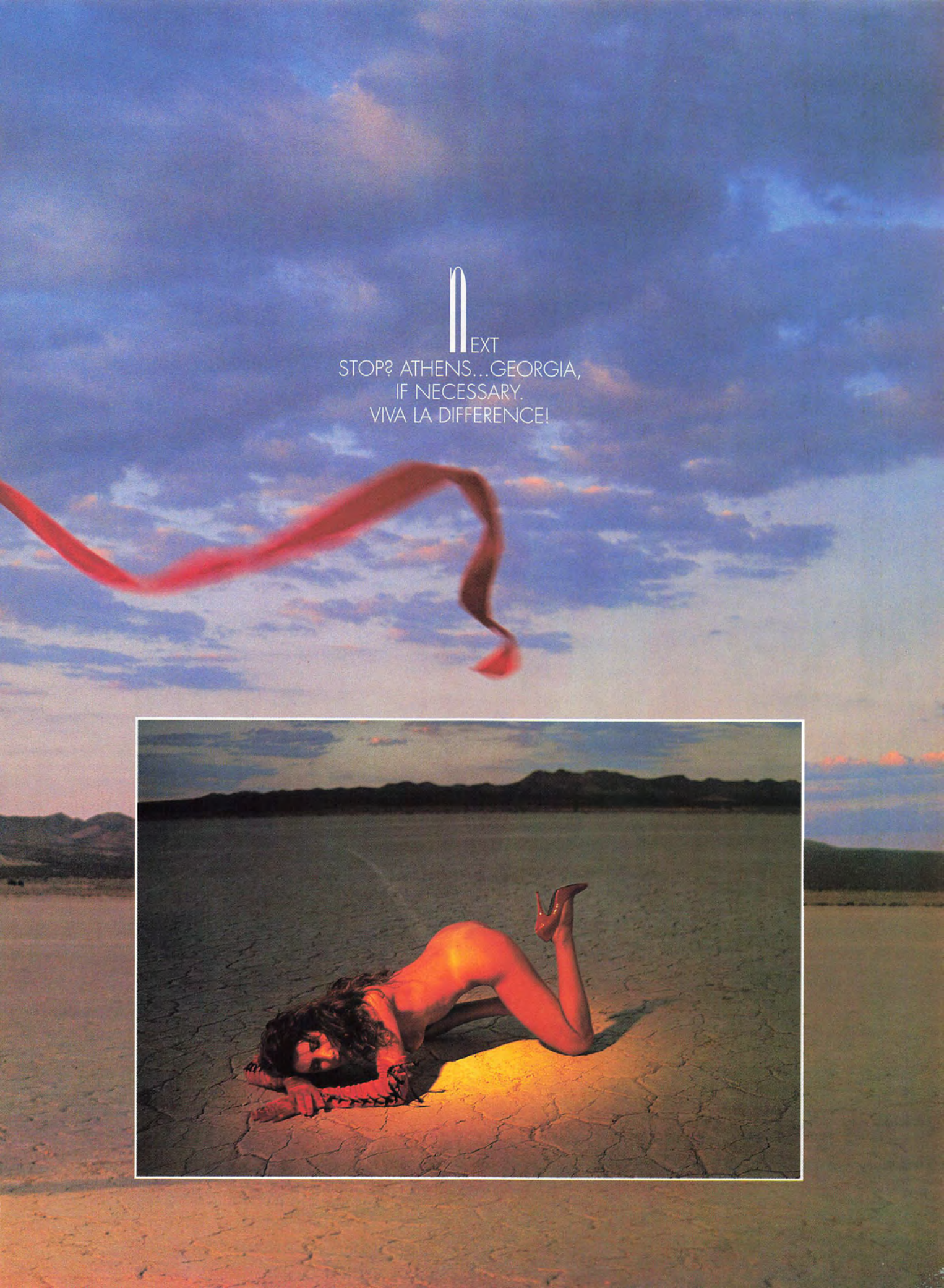
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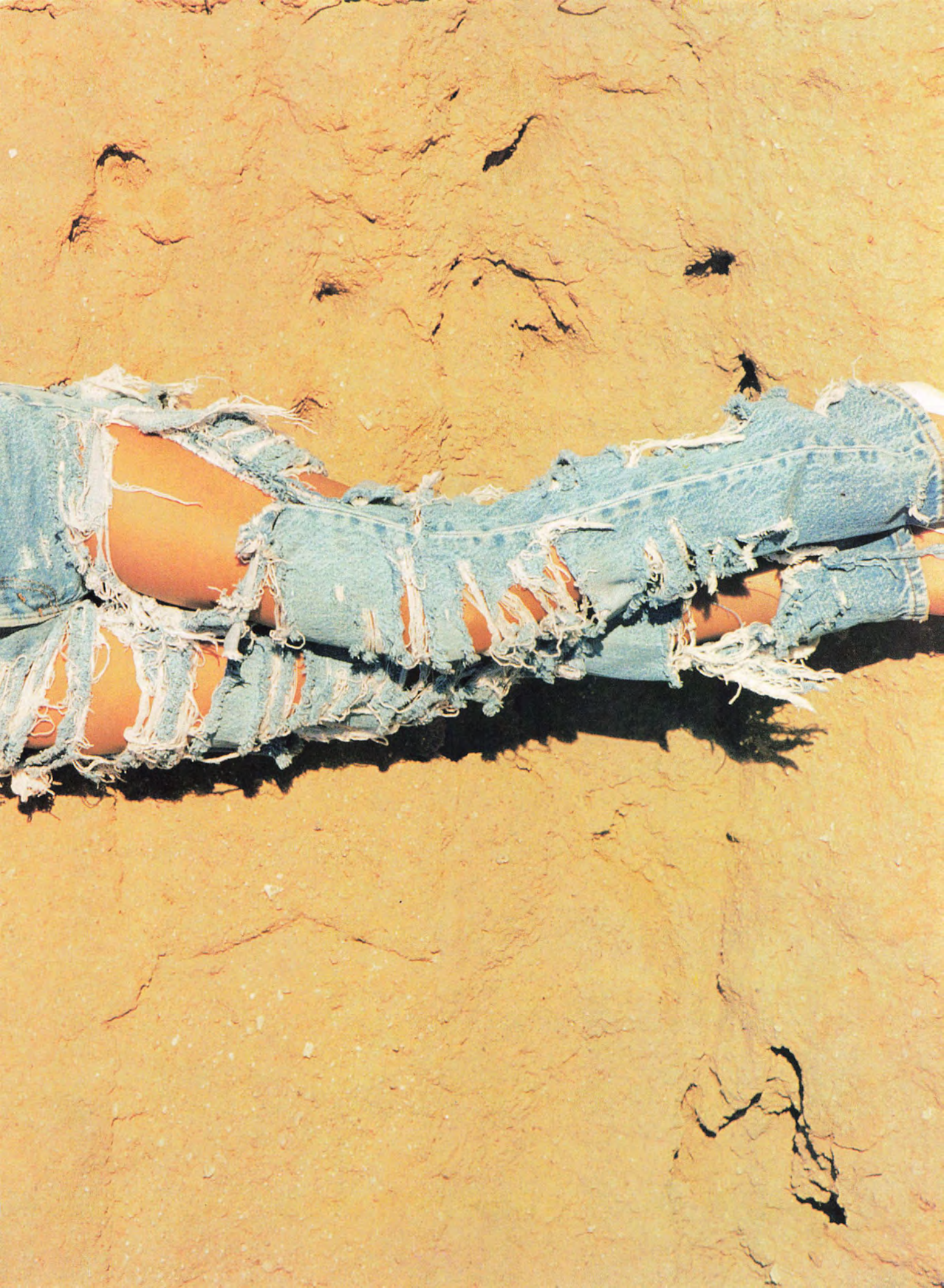

Deal

AMERICAN ORIGINALS

THE BITCH

FICTION BY WILLIAM T. VOLLMANN

BLACKWELL SAT WITH ONE HAND ON HIS KNEE, THE OTHER PALM AGAINST CHIN AS THE FINGERS DRUMMED SLOWLY AGAINST THE VISOR OF THE BASEBALL CAP, AND HE STARED AHEAD THROUGH HIS FINGERS THINKING HOW 'M I S'POSED TO GET MONEY? —RIGHT THEN HE HATED HIS WIFE. HATED HER LIKE POISONED SHIT ON BROKEN GLASS. WHAT HE WANTED, WHAT NAOMI SURELY WASN'T, WAS A SOMEBODY CHICK WHO'D STOP HIM FROM MAKING MONEY THE WAY HE MADE IT, WHICH WAS TO GO THROUGH THE WALL. NAOMI *NEVER* SAID BLACKWELL BABY THERE GOT TO BE ANOTHER SOLUTION; NAOMI *NEVER* SAID YOU LISTEN TO ME MOTHERFUCKER I BE *LEAVIN'* YOU IF YOU DON'T STOP WITH THAT CRAZY SHIT— WELL, SHE WAS YOUNG, JUST STARTING TO FIND OUT WHAT LIFE WAS ALL ABOUT; BLACKWELL KNEW HE HAD TO GET HIS OWN HEAD TOGETHER, BUT HE HAD TO *FIND* MONEY TO DO IT AND NAOMI SURE KNEW HOW

PAINTING BY JIM DEAL

to *lose* money on dope and silver stretch pants and you name it, not that he ever saw her bringing *in* money — 'course all she'd be good for was to ho anyway, and she'd do that regardless; she'd do that money or no money. Why, once when he'd driven down the street he'd seen her standing in shiny silver leotards, staring at the cars with clasped hands — not that that was proof, but it was something. Another time he'd seen her with her sister Marietta, both in ankle-length dresses with more layers than wedding-cakes!, Naomi in yellow, Marietta in blue, and they wore those you know Egyptian kind of sandals and dreadlocks and *bigass* plastic-gold bangles and rings; Marietta had on a bracelet with a crucifix like she was trying to be *righteous* or some shit like that; and Naomi had a golden crown and Marietta had a sky-blue headband dangling with blue plastic beads; he'd seen the bloods hanging around, like they didn't know if they were there to get their cocks sucked or WHAT. When he remembered that, he got to feeling sorry for himself, and sat drinking and panhandling in the park, where it was hot and gangly guys walked with white shiny grins. He hated Naomi. Hated her like stink.

Two men started fighting.

You better leave my baby alone, said one of the combatants, or you gonna have *problems*.

Within a minute, a fat cop had shown up. —Break it up, break it up! he yelled. Get going! He leaned against a trash can with crossed arms, crossed legs, waiting until everything got nice and peaceful. Another cop joined him.

Got *two* of 'em now! Blackwell said. If they shit on me, I'll try *anything!* —His pulse raged through his chest and shoulders until he wanted something to happen, but then the second cop finally left, and his colleague walked up and down the rows of benches, looking intently into everyone's face. The gentleman of the streets beside Blackwell nodded to him and ambled off before his turn came.

Blackwell looked right into Whitey's eyes. —I wasn't doing nothing, he said.

Didn't say you was, said the cop. Didn't say anything did I?

Blackwell stared him down. That time nothing happened, so he went over to some kids and started playing catch. —Not so far, boss, not so far, he said when one of the kids ran way out. Too much for me! —But he could always lob the ball the whole distance just the same; he was a strong man. —Maybe I throw more powerful than I *thought* I would, he said modestly, and the kid was wide-eyed with worship. —Come on, boss, laughed Blackwell. You gotta *develop* your pass! —What it came down to, he thought to himself, was that *she* didn't stop him, so why should he stop himself if she didn't even fucking care? Anyhow, what he did was inside jobs. He didn't hurt nobody. Sometimes on pigeon-winged nights he sneaked a truckload of fancy women's clothes from some warehouse and drove them to the Projects, where he went through them very very quickly with sure hands, picking out whatever he wanted, taking whatever he could carry in his borrowed van, and it was like Christmas for Blackwell and he was grinning and smoking rock and life was good and he was shouting to himself oh *baby!* When he was done, the Project people would descend on the truck with all the respectfulness of vultures and pick through what was left, Blackwell watching them through his rear-view mirror as he drove slowly away into the darkness, with clothes bundling him warm and secure against the night, and Blackwell was laughing

because he knew that by the time the cops showed if they ever did there'd be so many people running in so many directions that they never *could* figure out who had done it. When he got home Naomi would be sobbing oh my God and what're we gonna *do* if they put you in jail, but Blackwell had noticed that a brand-new dress that was some snazzy black-and-red and just the right size to cover her smug little ass would sure shut her up. He sure had noticed that. Anyhow, he wasn't hurting no one. Why if he stole a truckload of some fancy women's parka that was selling about as good as fried dogshit, then it was *advertising* for that parka; that parka would sell *great* in all the stores a few months later, just you wait and see. —But Naomi never understood that. She thought that Blackwell was *badass* or some shit like that. Well, what was he supposed to do? It wasn't *his* fault he had to go through the wall. It wasn't his fault that whatever happened happened. Once he broke into a safe and only expected to find a couple hundred bucks but there was *eight thousand* there, all in twenties and hundreds, so he shoved it into his car and started driving toward the Projects and the police went after him and he went faster and faster and got out of it leaving some pig in a squad car as mad as Naomi when he slapped her face but then he heard the sirens of more *more* police cars coming at him and he ducked in between two big Project towers and parked the car behind the other abandoned cars and jumped out and crawled under the edge among the broken glass and beer cans and hid there all night. In the morning the cops were driving up and the down the street looking for him because they *knew* he was there, but they didn't find him and he thought for sure that he could get away with it and he imagined her waiting up for him and wondering where he was and crying again and a big grin split his face; this was SHOWING the bitch! — and then he thought how great it was going to be when he got home and turned the key so quietly in the lock that it didn't wake her and there she was sleeping in her clothes with her head down on the kitchen table and her eyelids red and swollen with crying and then he'd yell *Boo!* and she'd wake up with a little scream and stare at him and he'd watch the anger flood into her face and then as she opened her mouth to scream at him he'd start stuffing money in it! ten dollar bills, twenty dollar bills, cramming all the money in her mouth to gag her and shut her up and astound her so that she'd love him. Oh, how *he* loved *her* — truth was, he couldn't find a single line more in her face than that time when he'd first

Naomi would be sobbing oh my God and what're we gonna *do* if they put you in jail, but Blackwell had noticed that a brand-new dress that was some snazzy black-and-red and just the right size to cover her smug little ass would sure shut her up.

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THE BITCH

With seven books published in six years, 34-year-old William T. Vollmann has become one of America's most prolific and imaginative writers. Hailed as a cross between Thomas Pynchon and William Burroughs, Vollmann orbits the dark margins of society, boldly chronicling the colorful lives of prostitutes, pimps, tramps, pornographers, skinheads and drug addicts. In the recently published "Thirteen Stories and Thirteen Epitaphs," excerpted here, he pairs each piece of short fiction with an epitaph. As he writes in the book's preface, "A good story is only a hearse to carry you to the ending where the epitaph waits."

seen her, her skin *so* soft and fine, lips crimson-wide and glistening so that when she started kissing him his face and body was smeared with her lipstick as if she could smear her taste all over him, and her lashes were as gracefully deadly as the tooth-hairs of Venus flytraps (but lately her eyes had gotten bigger in the narrow mask of her face and the way she looked at him was neither friendly nor unfriendly). So he had his hopes, and it would've *been* that way, too, except that there was a lady who'd seen Blackwell go under the hedge in the night! She looked at the hedge and saw Blackwell's liquid eyes looking at her so trustfully and she looked away and looked back at him with a scared determined merciless face and stepped back and Blackwell prayed *Oh Lord let her drop dead right now oh Lord don't let her open her big fat mouth AMEN* but Miss Snitch was already running toward the squad car yelling *Officer! Hey officer!* and a cop came and told her to get the hell out didn't she *see* this was a *dangerous area* right now and Blackwell prayed for a jet pane to crash into her heart but the cunt *still* wouldn't mind her own business and she ran down the street to where the other cops had been huddled with their walkie-talkies crackling like bacon, but now there was only a woman cop nosing around there when Miss Snitch yelled *hey, officers, I seen him!* and the pig listened to her yabbling for a minute and then pulled her gun and strode up so fast she thought that maybe Blackwell would think she wasn't afraid of him, but *hunh!* — he hadn't been born yesterday even though his heart went *bomb-bomb-bomb* because Miss Piggy was looking straight *at* him as if she saw him (which she couldn't) and she said come out of there and Blackwell lay still knowing she didn't see him even though her big blue pig-eyes were staring right at him from behind the plastic goggles and he could see her eyeballs getting bigger and bigger and Blackwell crouched perfectly still behind the thorns thinking to himself I'd like to make *you* oink you bigass honky pig ho and Blackwell's heart was beating very fast; he was feeling so alive, and he thought to himself she doesn't see me but then Miss Snitch called HE'S RIGHT THERE I *SEEN* HIM and the pig lady put her finger on the trigger and told Blackwell again to come out of there and he knew she saw him now and he could almost feel her breath on him; she was breathing very fast and hard and he said don't shoot and started coming out and the bitch cop went to her car, never looking away from him, and radioed for help — oh, she'd been *coy* about admitting in front of Blackwell that she was the only cop there, huh? — huh? — but he knew what was going down and thought it was pretty funny; he wasn't about to try anything, though, because she had that gun, so he just crouched there half out of the hedge with his head out like a turtle's and his hands on his head and the other cops came running and told him to come out and Blackwell said I'm coming and then he saw the cop he'd gotten away from in the first place back on the freeway and the cop was mad that Blackwell had escaped and gotten caught by a goddamn *cow* instead of him — imagine that! — so he got Blackwell in a chokehold that fucked him up for two weeks and they put the cuffs on and threw him into jail. All Blackwell could think of right then was it's all my wife's fault *goddamn* the motherfucking *bitch*.

Epitaph for A JAGUAR

You did not know that you were born so that your teeth could be a necklace. Ricardo did not know that he was born to girdle trees.

When he asked to go to high school, his father said: I'm sorry to disappoint you, son, but I don't have the money to send you. You'll have to become a *chiclero* like me.

At first the boy felt very sad, but he became strong. Nimbly he ascended the dark-greened cliffs of trees. He could tap eight or a dozen of them a day.

Now he loved to work. School was far on the road behind him. He loved the jungle whose veins he opened.

He became a hunter, whispering *tch-tch!* for silence as he chambered the slug. He held up his hand to say *wait!* and slipped away, scarcely ever returning without your predecessors: a bird already half-plucked, or a little reddish-brown deer slung over his shoulders with the neck hanging down perpendicular to the body, the head nodding, the black eyes still shiny, the ears still alert...

His father said: Good, Ricky. Now tie the feet. I will show you how.

High above, frond-shadows played up and down the animal's ribs, as if she were still breathing. Ricardo's father cut a *tikai*-vine and brought the hoofs together in a series of half-hitches. He adorned her with a collar of leaves, to keep the throat from opening at the bloody hinge.

Ricardo learned how to skin an animal perfectly, slowly, with the back of the blade so that the inside of the hide was pearly white. He gutted game in the hot sun by the greasy river as white butterflies flickered around the glistening scarlet neck-meat, and doctor-flies bit the backs of his hands (the barely visible welts would burn and itch).

His father said: Clean this part good, Ricky. Clean it very good, all the blood, so that the meat don't spoil.

There was only one rifle among them all. They let him carry it. Sometimes he became lonely, especially at night, and then as they sat around the fire they pretended to be musicians for him, playing rubber leaves for their guitars, blowing grassblade flutes until he laughed. They said: You are our hunter, Ricky!

He laughed for pride.

Then passed a time when he never saw anything to shoot, and you lived your life to the last morning when the sun was three-quarters of the way up into the ferns, which curled closely over the trail, and the whine of the flies was louder and louder.

Ricardo was on his way to girdle trees. The birds hushed hearing him and then began to cry again; and all around him were pattering sounds, any one of which could have been made by an animal, or a hunter, or a blowing branch, but Ricardo had learned in the jungle school, and so he listened on the grey mud of the old road; he slipped into the jungle, his way never barred by the dogs, and saw you.

You were almost lost in the blue-green tree-shadows, but he saw you. (It would be presumptuous to imagine you. I wasn't there. I only know that you were beautiful.) Now you were doomed. Ricardo came from people who did not know how to give up.

You streaked up a tree. The dogs ringed around shouting.

Ricardo lifted his gun. His face was shining. He took aim, thinking how proud my Dad will be! and pulled the trigger.

The cartridge did not explode.

He tried all his other cartridges, each in turn. None exploded.

You snarled.

He ran to get his father and the other *chicleros* and when they came the dogs were still crouched on all sides of you, barking up at you, and you growled and scratched the branch.

They sent him back to camp to get a knife and a file. Anxious, he thought that he knew a shortcut, but got lost where palms rose on straights and various diagonals fifty feet high, and fallen fern-tips drank

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the grey water in the deep tank ruts in the mud, into which he sank ankle-deep, calf-deep even though he avoided the pools covered with the dead leaves, the pools of clear water in which little white blossoms floated like stars. He pulled himself out and kept running. He was so excited that he could not stop smiling. Now he saw where he was. He recognized trees by their gashes. He was chasing your death down cool humid tree-tunnels whose air was made up of biting gnats. Yellow warblers flickered among the trees as he ran. When he reached camp at last, he found that someone had already gotten the tools, so he ran back to your tree and you were still snarling.

They cut a new firing pin for the rifle. They filed it well. Then a man took aim at you as you grinned hate. He pulled the trigger. Still your death did not come.

They took the gun apart, aimed the barrel at you and hit the cartridge with a hammer. You stared the bullet down, and it did not come.

At last Ricardo's father said: Ricky, it is time for school. I will show you how Mexicans kill.

He said: All of you — bark like dogs!

He lashed the knife to a stake and climbed up the next tree, a fat mossy tree thinly vine-veiled. The men were barking like dogs as loudly as they could. You, confused, afraid, enraged, crouched watching them, turning your head from side to side, as meanwhile Ricardo's father got within range, and then he stabbed you.

You screeched and leaped agonized to end him, but were caught in the tree-crotch. Ricardo's father pulled the spear out and stabbed you again. Then he jumped down. You opened your mouth. Then you tumbled down dead.

They sold your skin, but Ricardo wore the necklace made from your teeth until his own son was born.

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BE TRUE TO YOUR GHOUL

The toxoid, sleazoid, celluloid world of psychotronic film

BY STEVE GOLDBERG
PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEPHEN CLARK

One should be careful when navigating the steel and concrete morass known as the New Jersey Turnpike. As you traverse from the stately, white bread homes of the Palisades southbound towards the Delaware Water Gap, a sense of caution and fear is warranted. Exit at the wrong point anywhere between Newark, the Secaucus swamps and the toxic wasteland beyond, and be afraid. Be very afraid.

Just west of New York City and east of everywhere else lies the quaint little town of Tromaville, New Jersey. Like any other small, American town, it's comprised of brick and wooden-framed houses, a post office, five and dime, pharmacy and library. Vintage Rockwell centered between the World Trade Center and your friendly neighborhood nuclear power plant.

Welcome to "Tromaville, Toxic Waste Capital of the World. Kiwanis meet Thursdays at the Horror-day Inn. Incorporated 1974."

Tromaville is sort of a Mayberry for mutants, murderers, maniacs, monsters and mayhem. It's the home of the Toxic Avenger, a

The First Troma-tic Film From Hungary!
Lloyd Kaufman and Michael Herz Present A Troma Team Release
"Lolita meets Ilsa... The feminist 'flip side' of BLOODSUCKING FREAKS."
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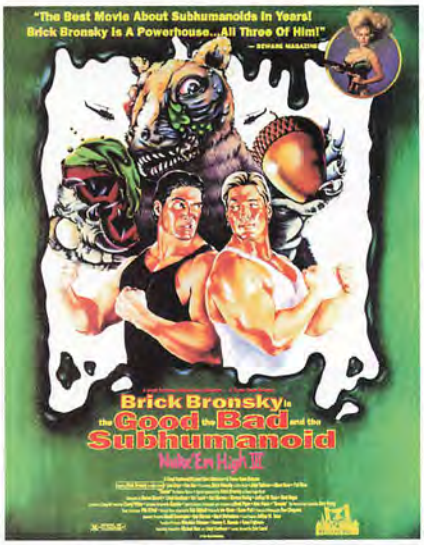
TROMA INC.

former 98-pound Barney Fife-type who goes by the name of Melvin Junko, the first superhero from the Garden State. Avoid the local high school bake sale — the dismembered student body of Nuke 'Em High glows in the dark. Look past the interestingly shaped roadside flora and enjoy some local wildlife, in this case it's a squirrel with large yellow teeth and bright red eyes standing approximately 15 stories tall. And no, that's not Andy Griffith patrolling the streets, but a former New York City cop who ate some bad sushi, gained the powers of an ancient Samurai warrior and is now called Sgt. Kabukiman. P.S. — anyone who resembles Aunt Bea is likely to rip off your head and batter-fry your brains for breakfast.

The most popular suffix in Tromaville is "oid," as in sleazoid, toxoid, nutzoid, celluloid and Lloyd. As in Lloyd Kaufman, who, with Michael Herz, is a founding father of Troma, Inc., the number one B-movie studio in the world. In the old days, audiences were treated to two features when they went to the theater; the film they paid to see and the B-movie, the throw-away. As a rule, B's generated little, if any notice. But Troma, Inc. has brought the genre to a whole new level, turning out profitable and strangely acclaimed titles for nearly 20 years.


"The Best Movie About Subhumanoids In Years! Brick Bronsky Is A Powerhouse...All Three Of Him!"
Brick Bronsky is the Good the Bad and the Subhumanoid
Nuke 'Em High II

Lisa Star thrilled Troma fans in "Class of Nuke 'Em High II," "Fortress of Amerikkka" and "Munchies," among others.

THE DISMEMBERED STUDENT BODY OF NUKE 'EM HIGH GLOWS IN THE DARK.

The offices of Troma, Inc. are consigned, appropriately, to a Manhattan neighborhood known as Hell's Kitchen — a section of town ruled by the notorious Irish mafioso, the Westies; where Chino shot Tony for singing to Maria; where Mickey Spillane's Mike Hammer kept law and disorder with his .45. As Kaufman once told Newsweek magazine of the four-story walk-up that is Troma Inc.'s office, "We got a dump here, but we own the dump."

The pair credit the Japanese director Mizaguchi and the comedic styles of Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin as having influenced their work. And certainly they've taken some inspiration from Roger "King of the B's" Corman's ability to make quality, entertaining films with less than large budgets. But mostly the two have a very keen sense of knowing just when to occupy abandoned ground.

"They seem to do things that no one else does," says Stan Lee, the creator of Spiderman, the X-Men and many other Marvel comics superheroes. "It's outrageous and far out, but not mean-spirited. It's a lunatic experience."

"I'm not interested in Ingmar Bergman particularly," confesses Kaufman. "I don't like movies with three people in a white room."

When the conventional wisdom out of Hollywood a dozen years ago said that you couldn't mix sex and humor, Kaufman and Herz successfully mined that territory with releases like "Squeeze Play," "Waitress" and "Stuck on You." "We discovered that raunchy movies, kind of sexy comedies were in demand," says Kaufman. 'Squeeze Play' came out about the same time as Animal House so we hit the jackpot and it was a huge hit." A huge hit to Troma might mean $10 million, less than half of what most Hollywood movies are made for. But when your production budget is $200,000, we're talking a serious return on investment.

Self-proclaimed contrarians, Troma found a profitable niche in going against the grain. Kaufman estimates the value of the Troma library at over $80 million. "The whole idea of starting one's own studio in 1974 or making independent movies was not the popular thinking. Everybody said it was impossible to make your own movies and to distribute them. And it is almost impossible, but we've managed to stagger along."

The evolution has been from sex comedies to sexy horror comedies. "One day we saw a headline in one of the movie trade publications saying that horror films were dead and we knew of course that horror had been with the movie industry since the days of Edison. So we figured if the experts are saying that horror is dead, let's go. Let's jump into it."

With titles like "Fertilize the Blaspheming Bombshell," "Nymphoid Barbarian in Dinosaur Hell," "Bloodsucking Freaks," "Rabid Grannies," "Chainsaw Chicks in Zombi-

Brinke Stevens held audiences spellbound with performances in "Spirits," "Haunting Fear," "Teenage Exorcist" and "Warlords."

town" and "The Good, the Bad and the Subhumanoid — Class of Nuke 'Em High Part III," it would be easy to dismiss these low budget films as violent, sex-laden exploitation flicks. In fact, they're all of that and then some. But the social messages of the Toxic Avenger series, for example, have been studied by scholars and honored in retrospectives by both the British and the American Film Institutes and by film festivals in Brussels, Madrid, Montreal, Tokyo and Rome. The hundred-plus films made and/or distributed by Troma, Inc. follow the tradition of those like Joseph Levine who introduced Godzilla to American theaters in the 1950s and Ed Wood ("Plan 9 from Outer Space") and pay homage to the spartan, economical entertainment spawned by Corman for American International Pictures.

Kaufman admits to finding a low cost method of script development. "We take a very serious theme and then we Tromatize it. We get a lot of ideas for movies out of the news. The "Class of Nuke 'Em High," which is one of our most successful franchises, came out of newspaper stories about how a nuclear power plant was being built just a few miles away from the most densely populated area in the U.S., namely New York City. The power plant was being built by a conspiracy of the bureaucratic, the business and the labor elite in a way that was using substandard materials. This nuclear power facility had a chance of blowing up and destroying the most important city on the face of the earth. If we had wanted to write a script of that nature, it never would've occurred to us; it's beyond our imagination that people could be so evil. But this was straight from the news so we came up with 'Class of Nuke 'Em High' where the nuclear plant was being built a quarter of a mile from the high school, cheap materials were used and stuff leaked into the school and kids were mutated."

In "Sgt. Kabukiman, N.Y.P.D.," the spirit of cooperation was the theme. Says Kaufman, "The U.S. and Japan are battling each other for supremacy of the world yet they love each other; if we approach it the right way the end result can be very productive. Kabukiman is a metaphor for the American and Japanese powers; if they come together they produce Kabukiman and if used properly Kabukiman can do all sorts of wondrous good things."

Critical acclaim is theirs. The Hollywood Reporter said that Troma's "War," the compelling saga of a downed tourist plane in a rebellious banana republic was the "best war movie ever made with the assistance of the Long Island State Park and Recreation Commission." They also said that it could serve, with minor script changes, as a how-to

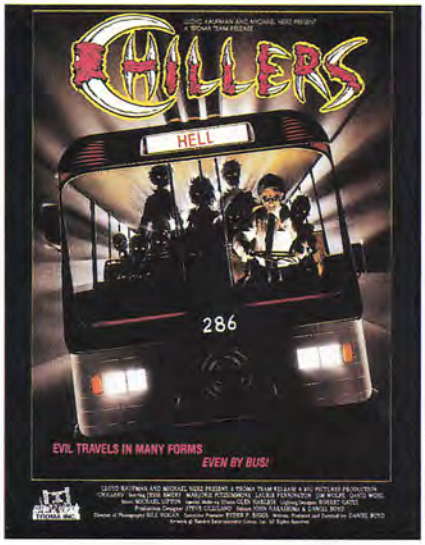
Debbie Dutch rose to the occasion in such chilling tales as "Death Dancers," "The Haunting of Morella" and "Dinosaur Island."

SMALL CLOTHING IS A SOCIAL STATEMENT, A SYMBOL TO CONSERVE RESOURCES.

documentary video for third world fascist regimes.

And Troma has great historical reverence, too, proud to note that "Maniac Nurses Find Ecstasy," shot on location in Hungary, is "the first Troma movie made in the birthplace of Franz Liszt."

The Troma catalog includes two of Kevin Costner's early works and Martin Scorcese's "The Wedding" which stars a young Robert DeNiro. Last year's Oscar winner for best supporting actress, Marisa Tomei, was an extra in "The Toxic Avenger." Madonna once lobbied hard for a role in "The First Turn-On" but was turned away by Michael Herz, a fact that Kaufman, (attending the Cannes Film Festival at the time), won't let him forget. "If I had been there, we would've written a part for her. That's the only time I've ever faulted my partner." The movie broke about the same time her first album did. Oops.



Of course, Madonna would be right for all sorts of Troma films, particularly their recent release "Vegas in Space," of which Kaufman boasts, "We are proud to be the studio that has brought you the first science fiction, space travel musical with a drag queen cast." Going into production next spring will be the romance and pathos of Shakespeare in "Tromeo & Juliet."

While the A-list of actresses regularly complain about the scarcity of really good female roles, that is never the case in a Troma film according to Kaufman. "The female characters that I write are very heroic and they tend to be very active. They always have very beautiful bodies and they dress in very small clothing.

"The small clothing is a social statement, a symbol for the shortage of resources and that we must conserve resources. Our female characters have a serious intention to them. They tend to be problem solvers and tend to be very active and tend to be thinkers.

"In 'Sgt. Kabukiman,' the female is the one who is really training Kabukiman to be a hero. In 'Toxic Avenger,' Claire, his blind blonde bimbo girlfriend is the one who prevents him from being subdued by the Faustian contract that he has made in 'The Last Temptation of Toxie.' In 'Squeeze Play'

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Zombie Island Massacre
DAVID BROADNAX • RITA JENRETTE

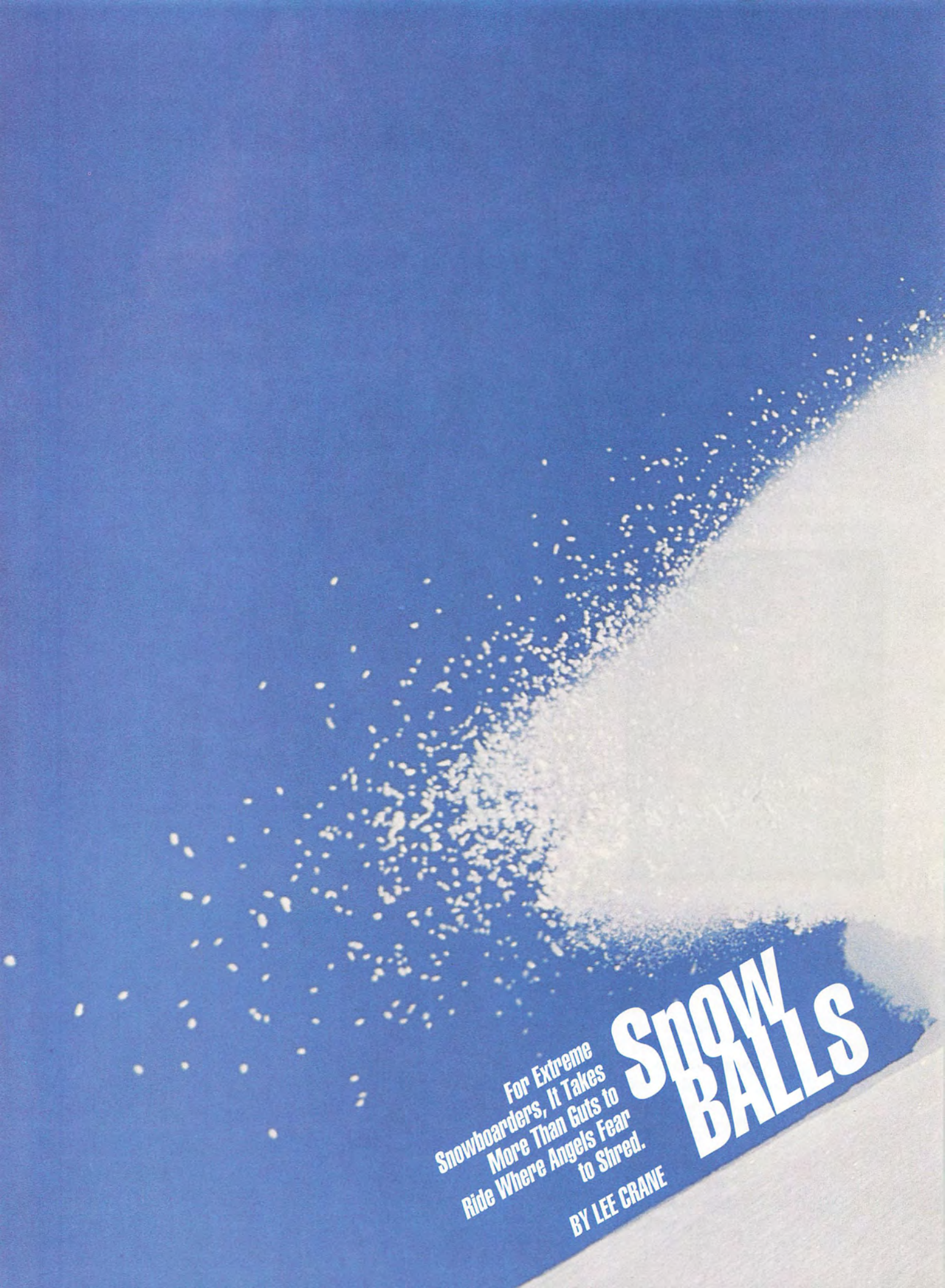
where once again the theme of dwindling resources are prominent in the attire, the women are thinkers and doers.

"The female lead in a Troma movie — a Tromette — is a very magnificent but active thinking female. People who look at our movies cannot have any objection to the way men or women are portrayed."

Whatever your perspective, the Troma, Inc. menu offers some of the most interesting film fare around. Says Kaufman, "The public knows that they'll be entertained but they also know they'll be given something to chew on...something that's kind of provocative."

Right. Just don't feed the squirrels. ●

Jasae' is fiendishly passionate in such films as "Bad Girls From Mars," "Karnal Crimes" and "Wizards of the Demon Sword."



SNOW BALLS

For Extreme Snowboarders, It Takes More Than Guts to Ride Where Angels Fear to Shred.

BY LEE CRANE

VUARNET

Shawn Farmer is standing on top of the world, a 170-centimeter long snowboard buckled to his feet. Below his board are a cornice, a small field of snow, then a cliff. The cliff is spiked with sharp, flesh-tearing, skull-crushing rocks. Several patches of snow dot the wall, but from below the snow seems completely irrelevant.

The big question: Why is he here? He sure ain't waiting for Search and Rescue workers to haul his ass outta there, and he is most definitely not starring in a Jeep commercial. No, this 28-year-old pro boarder is getting psyched for his final run in the 1993 World Snowboarding Extreme Championships in Valdez, Alaska. At the moment, he's in second place and making this run could mean the title. Not making it could mean...well, let's not even think about it.

Above, S. Farmer cheats death in Alaska; below & right, over the edge at Whistler, B.C.

The fact that anyone would be perched atop a cliff waiting to make a winning run in an extreme contest drips with irony. Extreme snowboarding isn't about contests or rules or big-money sponsors. It's about round-trip journeys through Satan's side yard without a flame-proof suit. And before an Alaska heli-ski lodge owner came up with the idea for a world championship, extreme was simply a way for bored boarders to scare the living shit out of themselves, their friends and their family.

Back in the old days all that extreme snowboarders required was some terrain that could cause bodily harm and a dare: "Bet you can't make that line." Narrow, rock-lined chutes, or anything else that looked impossible, was hunted down and bagged. The only glory was having done it, and a word-of-mouth buzz created by the faithful when they recounted their adventure stories. Small groups of extreme riders congregated wherever the threat of death loomed largest. Resorts like Mt. Baker, Washington; Snowbird, Utah; Squaw Valley, California; and Jackson Hole, Wyoming became magnets for young people who'd surely be judged mentally unsound in any court of law.

This underground ritual was hurled into the spotlight when Michael Cozad, owner of the Tsaina Lodge outside of Valdez, Alaska, decided that a world extreme snowboarding contest would be a great way to publicize his lodge while stoking a few riders and giving them their due recognition. The first year, an international group of 18 adrenaline addicts gathered at the small lodge for the three-day blowout. Everybody was freaked out by the terrain and the reality of snowboarding on mountains that could kill. When the time came for the second annual contest last spring, only six of the 18 competitors returned to tempt Alaska's Chugach Mountain Range a second time. That should tell you something.

But Shawn Farmer has a serious appetite. He's here for a second helping. As he backs away from the cornice at the top of the cliff the judges breathe in deeply. To survive this run, his landing must be flawless. Immediately after hitting ground he'll have to turn hard or he'll crash to the rocks below. A wrong move could mean curtains.

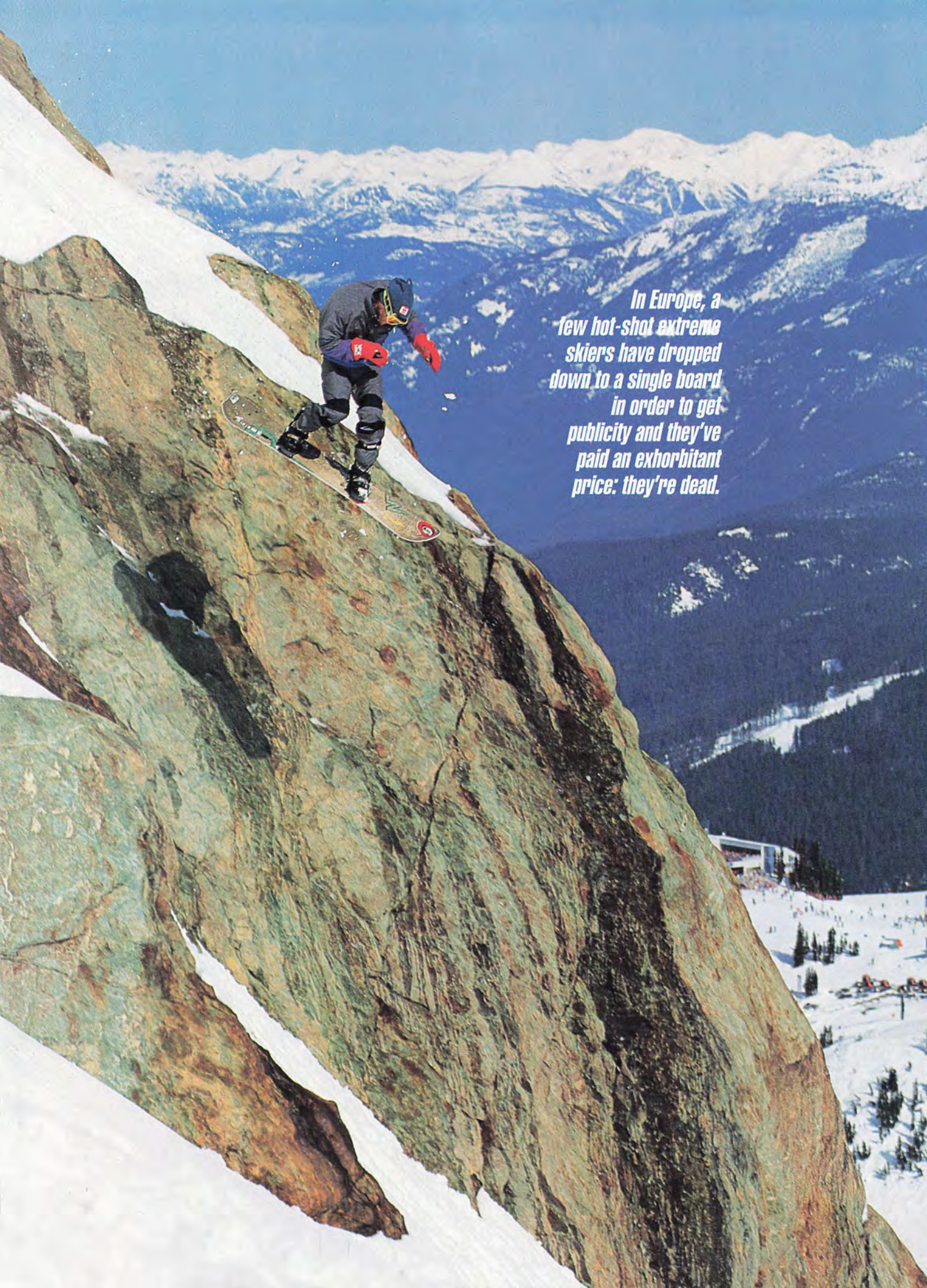
Two-thousand feet below, the judges watch through binoculars as Farmer launches from the cornice. The moment he hits the snow it's obvious he's out of control. The judges gasp as he plummets, head over heels, heels over head. "I thought this might be the first death in the contest," remembers Bonnie Zellers, a judge at Valdez for the last two years.

"I think I extended my landing gear a little too much, so when I hit I just ejected right over the bars," Farmer recounts. "I ended up doing cartwheels down a bunch of rocks. It was the closest I've ever felt to thinking it was all over."

Luckily, *very* luckily, his melon wasn't crushed — not even scratched. While tumbling through the rocks and flying off two (!) 20-foot drops, Farmer was able to control his flips enough to hit the snow and not the boulders. After he stopped sliding he got up and rode the rest of the way down the mountain. "It really shook me up. I was in shock," he says. "When I went back up I kind of wanted to do the same line again to redeem myself, but I couldn't do it."

The fall cost Farmer valuable points and the title, but he survived. A near-death experience is usually something that changes a person's life. Not so with Farmer. For him it was just another day at the office in a life devoted to snowboarding. At a banked-slalom race at Mt. Baker several years ago, Farmer showed up at registration without a penny, or a snowboard. He'd sold his only board to finance his trip to Washington.

"Death isn't as frightening to me as permanent injury ... When I put myself in situations it's usually something that, if I fuck up, will probably result in death. If I screw up I'll be totally obliterated, not just crippled."


In Europe, a few hot-shot extreme skiers have dropped down to a single board in order to get publicity and they've paid an exhorbitant price: they're dead.

When officials told him he couldn't register without the bucks, he said he'd pay them back with the prize money he was sure he'd win. They didn't go for it.

Farmer sat at the front door of a local bar with a bucket and a goal thermometer he'd drawn on a piece of cardboard and begged for cash. By the end of the evening he had scored enough for the entry fee, which included a three-day lift ticket. He made his contest runs and spent the rest of the weekend sampling Mt. Baker's buffet of death-defying treats.

"Death isn't as frightening to me as permanent injury," Farmer says matter-of-factly. "When I put myself in situations it's usually something that, if I fuck up, will probably result in death. If I screw up I'll be totally obliterated, not just crippled."

Surprisingly, none of North America's recognized extreme snowboarders have died yet. But in Europe, a few hot-shot extreme skiers have dropped down to a single board in order to get publicity and they've paid an exhorbitant price: they're dead.

Until recently the boy's club had an exclusive on extreme snowboarding. Women have ridden the extreme as long as men, but they couldn't seem to land much media exposure. This year when a 26-year-old woman named Morgan LaFonte finished 10th in the World Extreme contest (ahead of seven men and one woman), people began taking notice. "Women were not raised to be aggressive," says LaFonte, who blames the dearth of extreme females on an attitude problem. "I think women have the potential, they just need to learn how to unleash it."

At five-feet-two inches tall and 90 pounds, LaFonte learned long ago how to release her aggressiveness and use it to her advantage. She sees extreme boarding as an intellectual pursuit. "I think a lot of extreme is testing your mental boundaries," she explains. "Regardless of the fact that I am a small female, sometimes in my mind I'm a great big guy."

Before opening his snowboard shop in Mammoth Lakes, California and finishing third at the Alaska contest, 28-year-old Steve Klassen graduated from USC with a degree in entrepreneurial business, which he completed while on a full-ride track scholarship. "Extreme snowboarders seem to be much more intelligent and articulate than the average snowboarders on the hill," he says. "I think it's because they've been able to calculate the risk. If you can't, you don't last very long in extreme snowboarding."

Still, flirting with death doesn't rank very high on the to-do list of your average Rhodes Scholar. "It's a celebration of life," Klassen insists. "When you're pushing your limits you feel so much more alive."

Above, world champ Matt Goodwill soars. Far left & below, extremist Alex Warburton

It's this do-or-die philosophy that seduces most extremists. Something in their genetic coding makes it impossible to live life like normal people. "I wouldn't be satisfied any other way," Morgan LaFonte says. "I'd rather push myself and if I do it, I do it, and if I don't, I blow up."

Life off the snow is no different for these thrill seekers. The first night of the extreme contest Matt Goodwill, the guy who eventually finished first, partied so hard with his compadres that he had to be dragged to the helicopter the next morning. At the final awards presentation riders were forced to slam glasses (not test tubes) full of Jagermeister before receiving their awards.

Extreme snowboarding is an obsession, not a job. Only recently has it become possible to make money as an extreme snowboarder, and very few actually survive on that income. Of the top 10 riders at the world championships, only two make what could be misconstrued as "a living" from the sport. The rest work in snowboard shops and restaurants, or swing hammers during the summer to support their habit.

Shawn Farmer hasn't snowboarded a day since tumbling down that cliff in Valdez. But he's confident that the fall won't slow him down. "I'm still going to go all out," he says. "I'm sure I'll think about that day, but it won't keep me from doing anything."

In extreme snowboarding the possibility of death is simply another component of the sport. Like snow conditions or terrain. It's something that must be acknowledged, dealt with, and packed away somewhere in the rider's mind. "Some people want to be remembered as 'That guy who died,' but that's not how I want to go out," says Farmer. Then, after calculating just what those final, glorious moves could do for his extreme reputation, a maniacal chuckle escapes his lips. "Well, maybe it is." ●

Christmas rapping with Gilbert Gottfried

YULE DAZE

BY STEVE GOLDBERG

"WHEN CHRIST WAS BORN, THEY DECIDED IT WOULD BE A HOLIDAY CELEBRATED BY SPECIAL, HOUR-LONG EPISODES OF 'HAPPY DAYS' AND 'DIFFERENT STROKES,'" EXPLAINS GILBERT GOTTFRIED, WHO, WHEN NOT PERFORMING COMEDY IS A WORLD RENOWNED THEOLOGIAN. "THAT'S REALLY THE ONLY REASON IT EXISTS, SO PEOPLE LIKE HENRY WINKLER COULD GET MORE AIR TIME."

GILBERT GOTTFRIED CONFESSES THAT HE TRIES TO AVOID HOLIDAYS WHERE GIFTS ARE A REQUIREMENT. NOT SURPRISING WHEN YOU CONSIDER HIS PAST EXPERIENCES.

"I REMEMBER THAT MY PARENTS ONCE BOUGHT ME SOME LIFE INSURANCE AND LATER ON SOME STUFF WITH LITTLE SMALL PARTS THAT I COULD SWALLOW," HE RECALLS. "MY PARENTS WOULD GO TO STORES AND ASK, 'DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING WITH SMALL PIECES THAT BREAK OFF AND COULD POSSIBLY GET LODGED IN A KID'S WIND PIPE?' IF THAT DIDN'T WORK, MY FATHER WOULD DECORATE THE RADIATOR WITH SPECIAL HOLIDAY LEAD PAINT."

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ARLENE GOTTFRIED

HANUKKA is
GELT

When pressed, Gilbert concedes that there are two things he would like this holiday season. "Personally, I don't drink, but I would like a gift certificate to the Betty Ford Clinic. It's the best place to meet rich, insecure women at their most vulnerable moment. If things had gone differently Liz Taylor could've been mine."

And what else? "I wanted to give myself the gift of being on the cover of People magazine this year, but the only way to do it is by being sexually abused by your parents. I wear provocative clothing around my parents and hope that something will happen. But I have the same luck with them that I have with women."

For those who haven't finished off their Christmas gift shopping, Gottfried offers the following suggestions:

Socks — Socks are good. Socks are noncommittal. Socks are non-sexual. Socks are something you give to people when there are no sexual feelings between you. Socks are something your grandmother gives you. If you give someone socks, you know you'll never go to bed with them. A lot of women send me socks.

Sweaters — Sweaters were created years ago as a gift item that you'd never use. They were made specifically as something to push in the back of the closet. It's a closet filler. It allows you to put any good stuff you might have near the front.

Ties — A tie means you're cheap. Tie is an ancient Greek word for cheap bastard. But then again, you've got to consider the source; If Sharon

Stone were to give me a tie, what would that mean? It means I'd be over right away. I'd kill people on the freeway in my haste. I once tried to tie up my girlfriend but all I had were those clip-on ties. It was terrible. They would fly across the room every time she moved. I think one killed her cat.

Fruitcakes — Fruitcakes are made by monks, and as everyone knows monks were never known for their great cooking skills. No one ever goes, "Gee, this was some great food from a monk!" Fruitcakes are known to last over 50 years; food that lasts that long I don't want to eat. Fruitcakes are there to push behind the sweaters. I'd eat one of the sweaters before I'd bite into one of those fruitcakes.

Appliances — You can never have enough toasters, you can never have enough toast. However, this year I'm going to send my enemies juicers. It takes about $50 worth of apples to make half a spoonful of yellow-brown sludge, the kind of stuff that if you put it in a cup and gave it to your doctor, he'd operate on you right away.

Underwear — It depends on the underwear. If someone gives you bikini briefs, that's a come-on. If they give you large boxers, it means they think of you as an old man who walks around clearing his nose in the house. I tried going for that Calvin Klein look (we used to call those wedgies). I try to show more of my underwear to be hip so I wear my pants down around my ankles. It's hard to walk but I've considerably cut down my time in going to the bathroom. No woman's ever sent me underwear. They usually send me overalls, very large overalls.

Videotapes — I received a few X-rated videotapes once but I broke my VCR by constantly putting quarters in it. Force of habit I guess. So I gave the tapes to my grandmother. She enjoys showing them over the holidays. The family gets together for dinner and then we watch some porno. Then we sing carols.

Marital Aids — Once you get into power tools, the marriage is over. At the point where your wife doesn't turn you on, I don't think Black & Decker will do it either. The ultimate marital aide is a new wife. For those who aren't married, here's what I use, a good hand lotion.

Cuff Links — Cuff links are nice. I got some lovely cuff links once but the problem is I don't have any dress shirts so I had to borrow a hole punch. Also, I realized that they tend to look funny on a short sleeve shirt.

Gilbert's Christmas Gift List

President Clinton — A Suzanne Sommers Thigh-Master. Certainly not any French briefs, and for his relatives, some nice books without big words in them. Maybe a copy of the movie "Deliverance," which I understand is sort of a family home movie for them.

His current girlfriend, Inflatable Inga — A latex patch and an air patch. We had some rough sex. I said some things I shouldn't have and she blew up. I feel terrible about it.

His parents — My current telephone number and where I'm living. I think it's time.

Prince Charles — A staple gun to hold his ears back. He keeps getting blown off his polo pony by big gusts of wind.

Joey Buttafucco — A sign from Disneyland that says "Unless you are this tall, I can't have sex with you."

Michael Jackson — A collection of Mr. Potato Head noses so he could wear a new one every day. And a subscription to Boy's Life.

Heidi Fleiss — A big jar of candy-coated antibiotics that she can gobble like tic-tacs. I can't understand it. She has screwed half of Hollywood but I still can't get a date. I asked her for a kiss. She said that's one body part she wouldn't touch.

Pope John Paul — The complete video catalogue of "Baywatch." Don't ask why. He doesn't watch the girls. He simply admires the work of David Hasselhoff.

Elizabeth Taylor — What can you get a woman who has everything, including 50 extra pounds, a voice like Betty Boop, a friendship with Michael Jackson and a plumber for a husband? She *has* everything.

Cindy Crawford — Me, no question about it. I'd wrap up myself and send me right over. Cause I've got some parts that could be swallowed. ●

In case of fog, dial 1-800-BE-THERE (238-4373) to send a gift of Crown Royal for the holidays. Void where prohibited.

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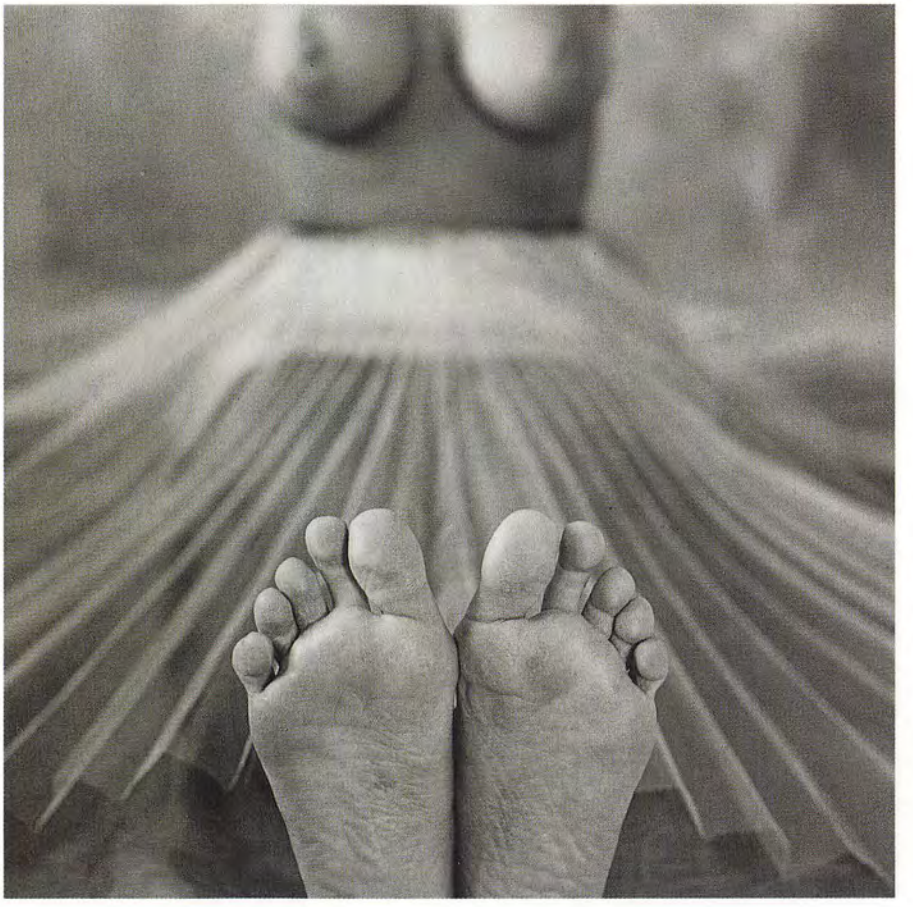
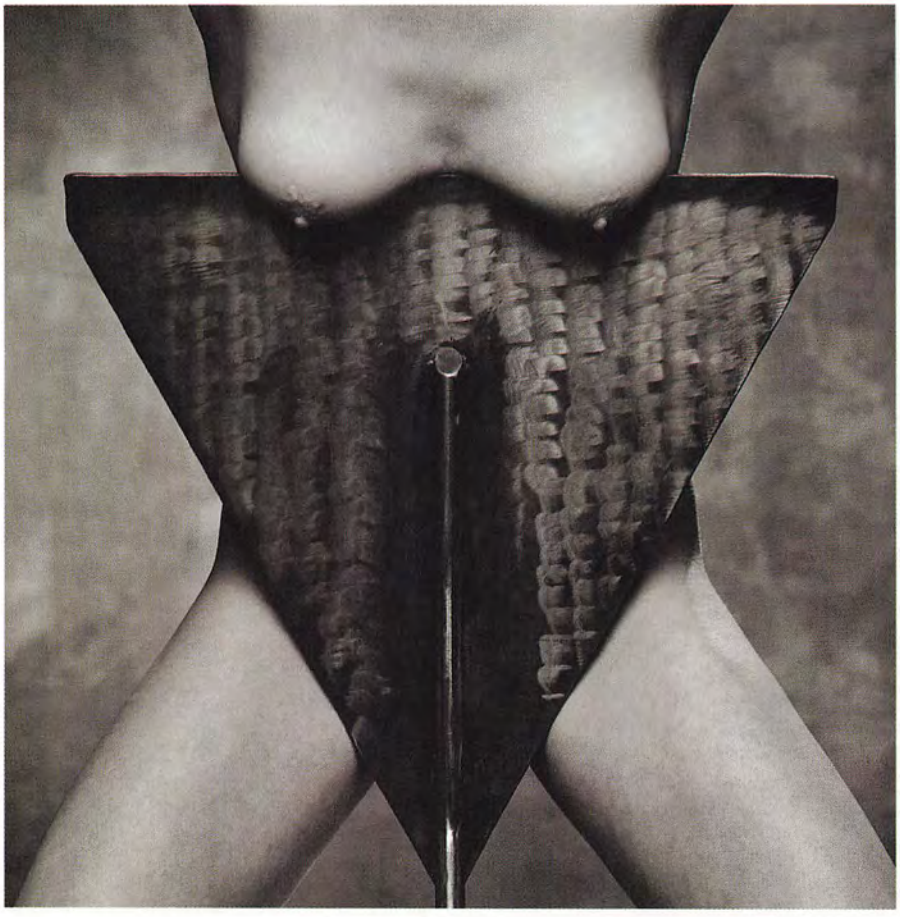
TOM ZIMBEROFF IS PRIMARILY A PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHER. HIS SHOTS OF MUSICIANS, **MOVIE STARS, ARTISTS AND POLITICIANS** GRACE THE PAGES OF MAGAZINES AROUND THE WORLD. ON HIS OWN TIME, **ZIMBEROFF GOES TO THE OTHER EXTREME: PHOTOGRAPHING NUDES AS ABSTRACT DESIGN.** "IN MY PORTRAITURE, I'M DEEPLY MOVED BY PEOPLE'S CHARACTER AND I TRY TO PORTRAY EACH INDIVIDUAL'S SPECIFIC, UNIQUE ASPECTS IN THE PICTURE. I CALL THESE **'MY BODY OF NEW WORK.'"**

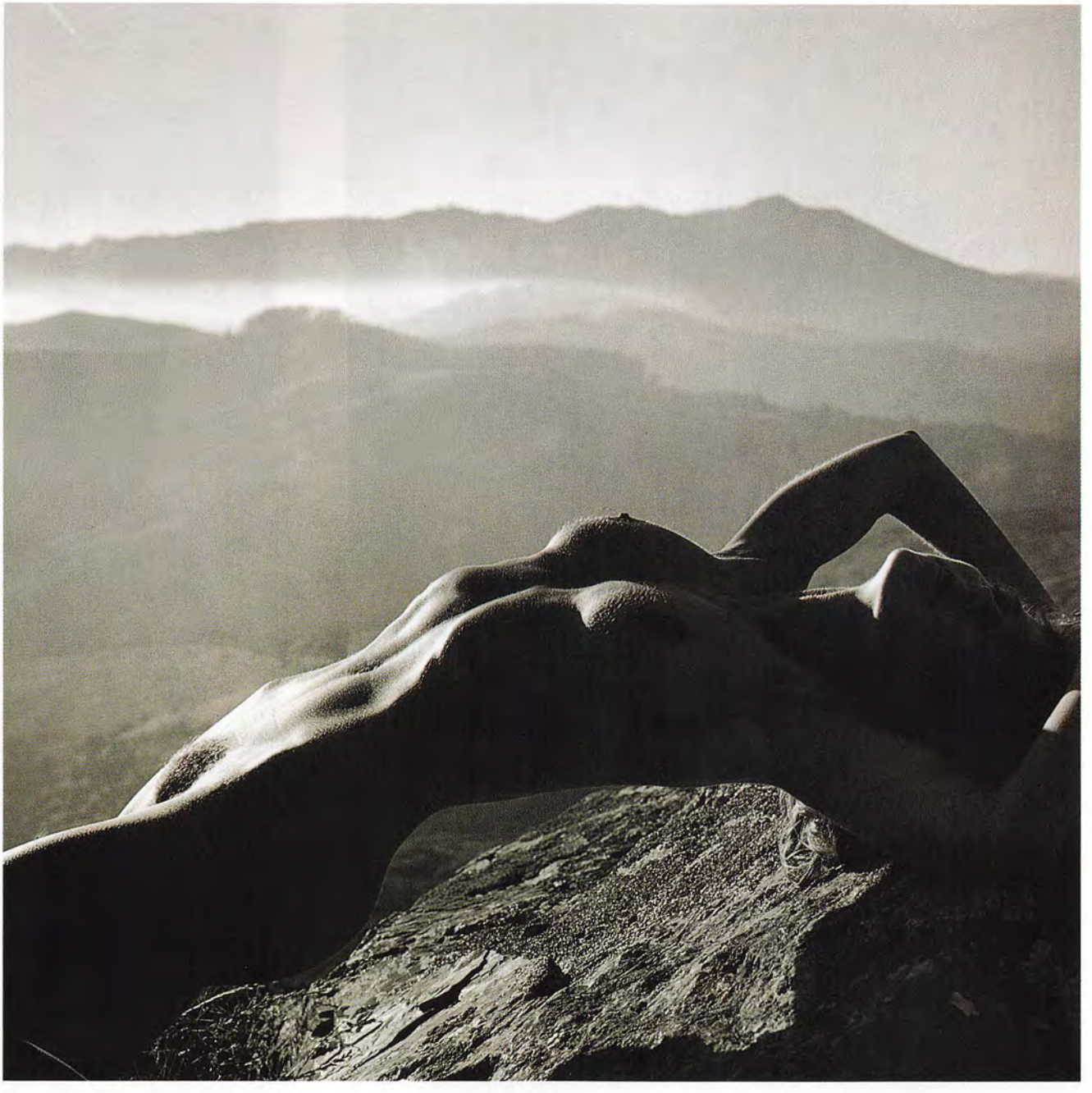
TOM ZIMBEROFF



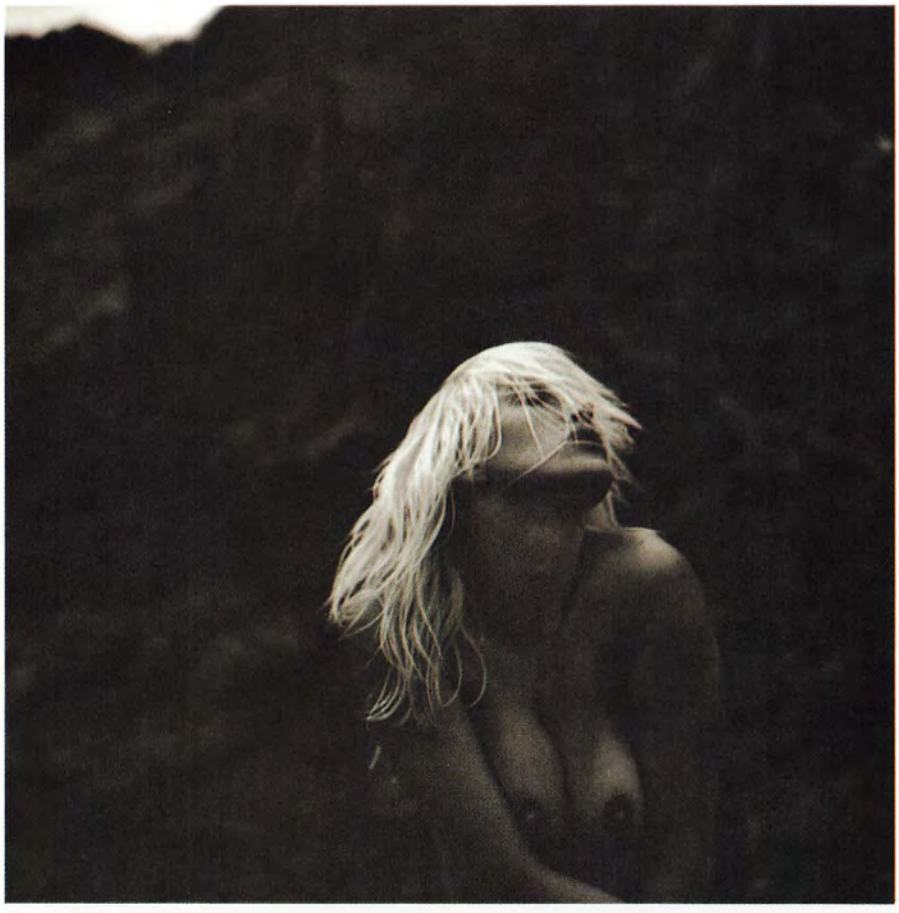


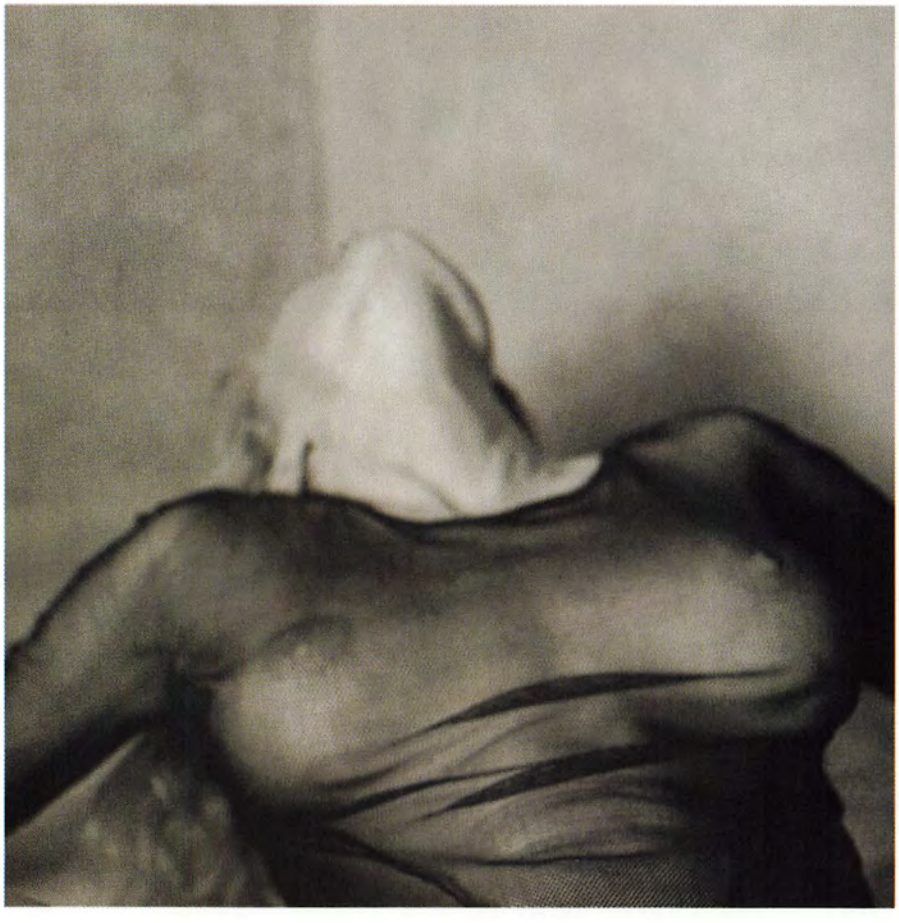
"THE FACES DO NOT SHOW IN THESE PHOTOGRAPHS BECAUSE THE PERSONALITIES ARE NOT AS IMPORTANT AS THE SHAPES AND TEXTURES. IN THESE SHOTS, THE PERSONALITY OF THE SUBJECT IS *NOT* THE SUBJECT."

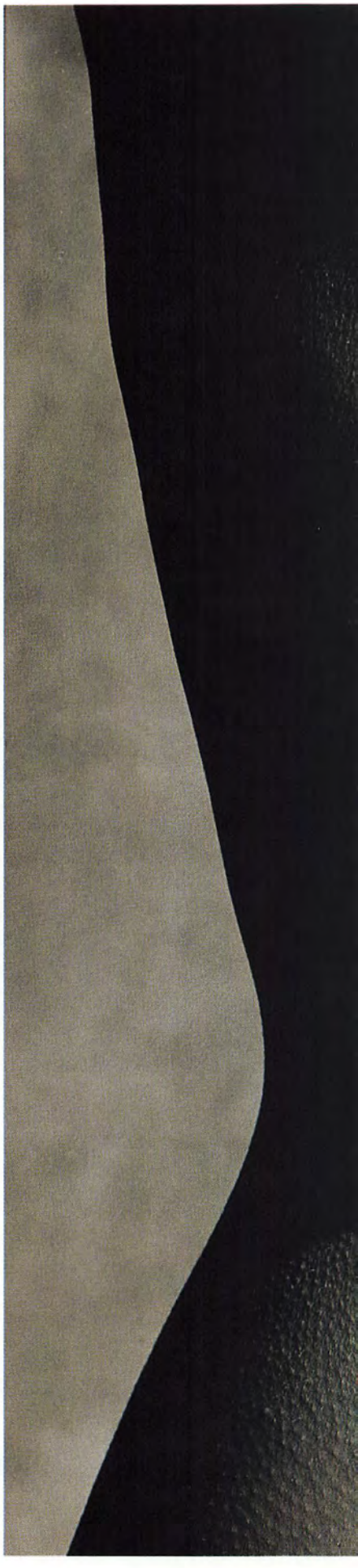
"LATELY," HE ADDS, "I'VE BEEN TRYING TO MERGE THE DISCIPLINES OF

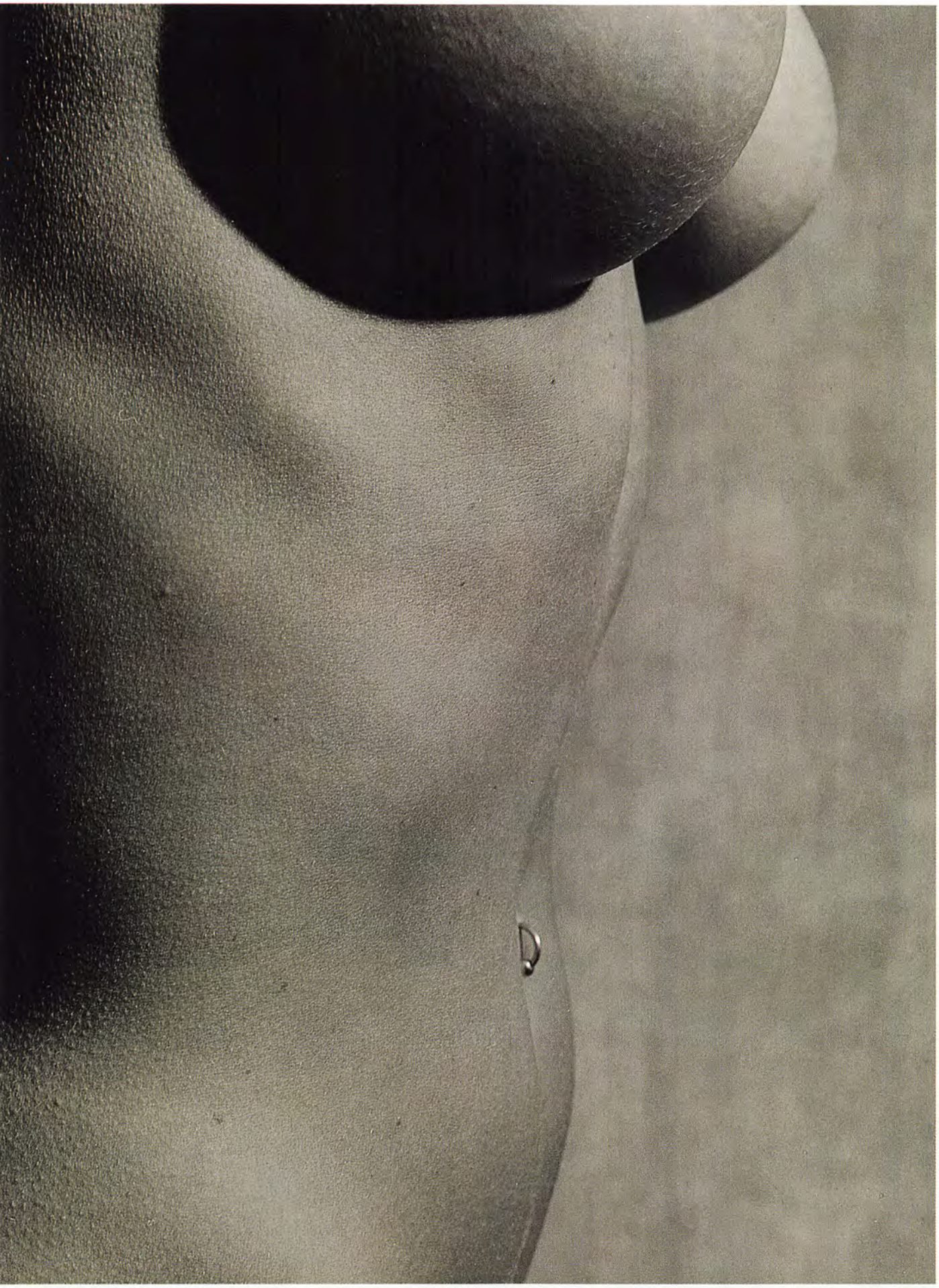


NATURE PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE NUDES WHENEVER I COULD. THE SHOT ABOVE, FOR INSTANCE, IS THE MIRROR IMAGE OF MT. TAMALPAIS IN THE BACKGROUND, WHICH, ACCORDING TO LEGEND, WAS FORMED BY A WOMAN AND HAS TAKEN THE FORM OF A SLEEPING LADY."









The father, and the holy dope

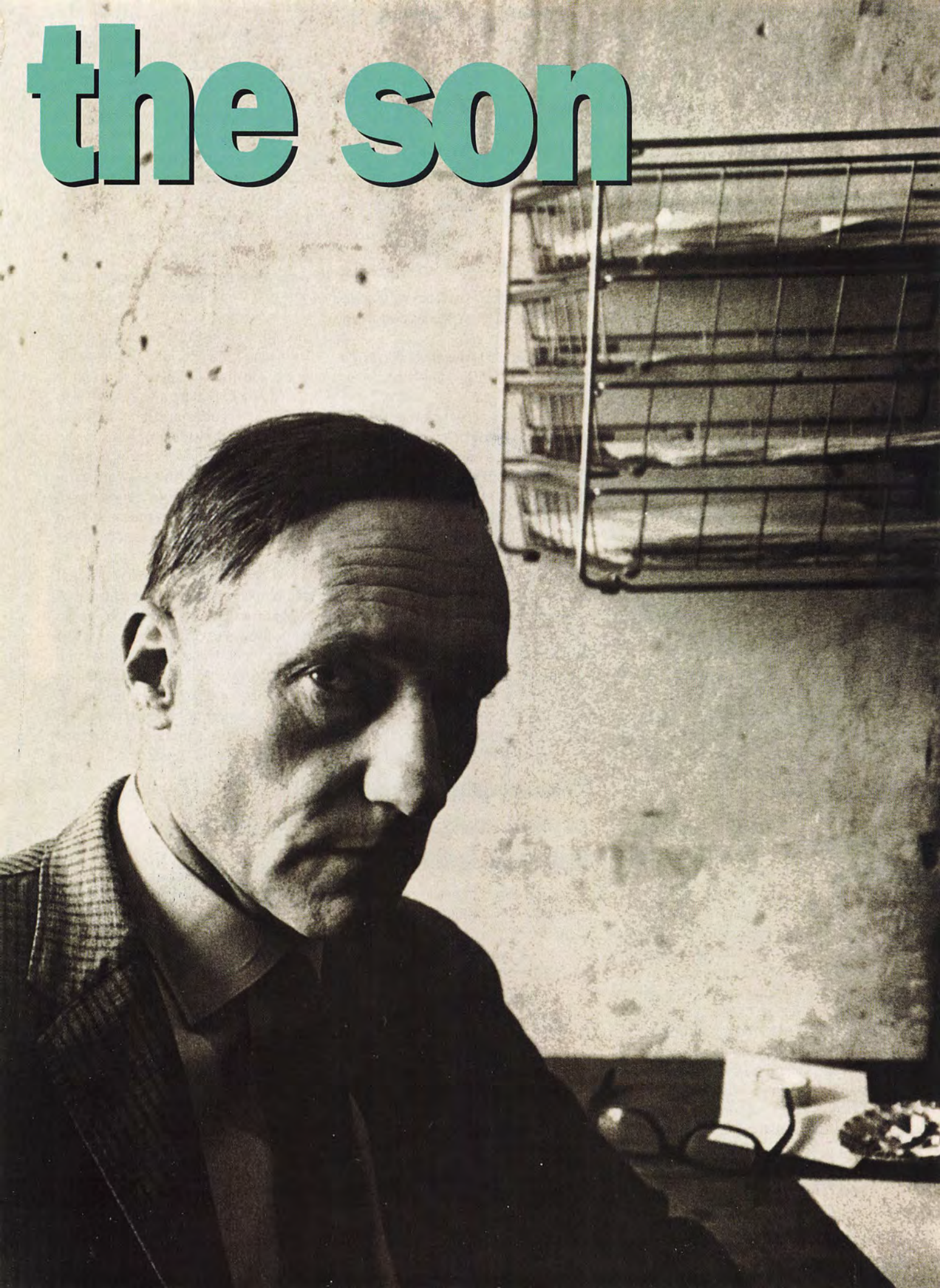
The elder statesman of Cool, William Burroughs fathered progeny both literary and literal. As dean of the American Beat movement, he influenced and inspired the likes of Jack Kerouac, Allen Ginsberg and Gregory Corso. Less known, however, is the fact that Burroughs had a son, William S. Burroughs, Jr., by his wife, Joan Vollmer. Burroughs was mostly an absentee dad — after accidentally killing Vollmer in 1951 in Mexico, his parents took over the care of four-year-old Billy Junior. But he seems to have passed on to his offspring his talent for writing and taste for drugs. Burroughs Jr.'s two autobiographical novels — like much of his father's work — speak frankly of his history of drug addiction.

After graduating from Harvard, Burroughs *pere* moved to New York with thoughts of becoming a writer. He supported himself and his morphine habit by forging stolen prescriptions for drugs and rolling drunks in the subways. In the spring of 1950, he began a factual book about his drug experience and wrote daily, fueled by morphine injections. Under the pseudonym of William Lee, the book was published in 1953 as "Junky: Confessions of an Unredeemed Drug Addict." By that time, Burroughs had already taken up residence in Tangier, where he could live cheaply, score the drugs he needed and work on his masterpiece, "Naked Lunch."

In 1961, 14-year-old Billy Burroughs visited his father in Tangier. His account of the trip was included in his second book, "Kentucky Ham" (1973). At the time, Burroughs senior was sharing his house in Tangier with two Englishmen, Mikey Portman and Ian Sommerville. Billy did all he could to stand off the Brits' sexual advances and passed the time with a little help from the unlimited supply of drugs in the household.

This winter marks the 40th anniversary of the publication of "Junky" and the 80th birthday of William Burroughs (William Jr. died March 3, 1981 from liver transplant complications). In celebration, we print an excerpt from "Junky" and a selection from "Kentucky Ham."

the son



Junky

My first experience with junk was during the War, about 1944 or 1945. I had made the acquaintance of a man named Norton who was working in a shipyard at the time. Norton, whose real name was Morelli or something like that, had been discharged from the peacetime Army for forging a pay check, and was classified 4-F for reasons of bad character. He looked like George Raft, but was taller. Norton was trying to improve his English and achieve a smooth, affable manner. Affability, however, did not come natural to him. In repose, his expression was sullen and mean, and you knew he always had that mean look when you turned your back.

Norton was a hard-working thief, and he did not feel right unless he stole something every day from the shipyard where he worked. A tool, some canned goods, a pair of overalls, anything at all. One day he called me up and said he had stollen a Tommy gun. Could I find someone to buy it? I said, "Maybe. Bring it over."

The housing shortage was getting under way. I paid fifteen dollars a week for a dirty apartment that opened onto a companionway and never got any sunlight. The wallpaper was flaking off because the radiator leaked steam when there was any steam in it to leak. I had the windows sealed shut against the cold with a caulking of newspapers. The place was full of roaches and occasionally I killed a bedbug.

I was sitting by the radiator, a little damp from the steam, when I heard Norton's knock. I opened the door, and there he was standing in the dark hall with a big parcel wrapped in brown paper under his arm. He smiled and said, "Hello."

I said, "Come in, Norton, and take off your coat."

He unwrapped the Tommy gun and we assembled it and snapped the firing pin.

I said I would find someone to buy it.

Norton said, "Oh, here's something else I picked up."

It was a flat yellow box with five one-half grain syrettes of morphine tartrate.

"This is just a sample," he said, indicating the morphine. "I've got fifteen of these boxes at home and I can get more if you get rid of these."

I said, "I'll see what I can do."

At that time I had never used any junk and it did not occur to me to try it. I began looking for someone to buy the two items and that is how I ran into Roy and Herman (Herbert Huncke).

I knew a young hoodlum from upstate New York who was working as a short-order cook in Riker's, "cooling off," as he explained. I called him and said I had something to get rid of, and made an appointment to meet him in the Angle Bar on Eighth Avenue near 42nd Street.

"The morphine I can get rid of right away, but the Tommy gun may take a little time."

This bar was a meeting place for 42nd Street hustlers, a peculiar breed of four-flushing, would-be criminals. They are always looking for a "setup man," someone to plan jobs and tell them exactly what to do. Since no "setup man" would have anything to do with people so obviously inept, unlucky, and unsuccessful, they go on looking, fabricating preposterous lies about their big scores, cooling off as dishwashers, soda jerks, waiters, occasionally rolling a drunk or a timid queer, looking, always looking, for the "setup man" with a big job who will say, "I've been watching you. You're the man I need for this setup. Now listen..."

Jack — through whom I met Roy and Herman — was not one of these lost sheep looking for the shepherd with a diamond ring and a gun in the shoulder holster and the hard, confident voice with overtones of connections, fixes, setups that would make a stick-up sound easy and sure of success. Jack was very successful from time to time and would turn up in new clothes and even new cars. He was also an inveterate liar who seemed to lie more for himself than for any visible audience. He had a clean-cut, healthy country face, but there was something curiously diseased about him. He was subject to sudden fluctuations in weight, like a diabetic or a sufferer from liver trouble. These changes in weight were often accompanied by an uncontrollable fit of restlessness, so that he would disappear for some days.

The effect was uncanny. You would see him one time a fresh-faced kid. A week or so later he would turn up so thin, sallow and old-looking, you would have to look twice to recognize him. His face was lined with suffering in which his eyes did not participate. It was a suffering of his cells alone. He himself — the conscious ego that looked out of the glazed, alert-calm hoodlum eyes — would have nothing to do with this suffering of his rejected other self, a suffering of the nervous system, of flesh and viscera and cells.

He slid into the booth where I was sitting and ordered a shot of whiskey. He tossed it off, put the glass down and looked at me with his head tilted a little to one side and back.

"What's this guy got?" he said.

"A Tommy gun and about thirty-five grains of morphine."

"The morphine I can get rid of right away, but the Tommy gun may take a little time."

Two detectives walked in and leaned on the bar talking to the bartender.

Jack jerked his head in their direction. "The law. Let's take a walk."

I followed him out of the bar. He walked through the door sliding sideways, "I'm taking you to someone who will want the morphine," he said. "You want to forget this address."

We went down to the bottom level of the Independent Subway. Jack's voice, talking to his invisible audience, went on and on. He had a knack of throwing his voice directly into your consciousness. No external noise drowned him out. "Give me a thirty-eight every time. Just flick back the hammer and let her go. I'll drop anyone at five hundred feet. Don't care what you say. My brother has two 30-caliber machine guns stashed in Iowa."

We got off the subway and began to walk on snow-covered sidewalks between tenements.

"The guy owed me for a long time, see? I knew he had it but he wouldn't pay, so I waited for him when he finished work. I had a roll of nickels. No one can hang anything on you for carrying U.S. currency. Told me he was broke. I cracked his jaw and took my money off him. Two of his friends standing there, but they kept out of it. I'd've switched a blade on them."

We were walking up tenement stairs. The stairs were made of worn black metal. We stopped in front of a narrow, metal covered door, and Jack gave me an elaborate knock inclining his head to the floor like a safecracker. The door was opened by a large, flabby, middle-aged queer, with tattooing on his forearms and even on the backs of his hands.

"This is Joey," Jack said, and Joey said, "Hello there."

Jack pulled a five-dollar bill from his pocket and gave it to Joey. "Get us a quart of Schenley's, will you, Joey?"

Joey put on an overcoat and went out.

In many tenement apartments the front door opens directly into the kitchen. This was such an apartment and we were in the kitchen.

After Joey went out I noticed another man who was standing there looking at me. Waves of hostility and suspicion flowed out from his large brown eyes like some sort of television broadcast. The effect was almost like a physical impact. The man was small and very thin, his neck loose in the collar of his shirt. His complexion faded from brown to a mottled yellow, and pancake make-up had been heavily applied in an attempt to conceal a skin eruption. His mouth was drawn down at the corners in a grimace of petulant annoyance.

"Who's this?" he said. His name, I learned later, was Herman.

"Friend of mine. He's got some morphine he wants to get rid of."

Herman shrugged and turned out his hands. "I don't think I want to bother, really."

"Okay," Jack said, "we'll sell it to someone else. Come on, Bill."

We went into the front room. There was a small radio, a china Buddha with a votive candle in front of it, pieces of bric-a-brac. A man was lying on a studio couch. He sat up as we entered the room and said hello and smiled pleasantly, showing discolored, brownish teeth. It was a Southern voice with the accent of East Texas.

Jack said, "Roy, this is a friend of mine. He has some morphine he wants to sell."

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STEINER GERMANY

The man sat up straighter and swung his legs off the couch. His jaw fell slackly, giving his face a vacant look. The skin of his face was smooth and brown. The cheekbones were high and he looked Oriental. His ears stuck out at right angles from his asymmetrical skull. The eyes were brown and they had a peculiar brilliance, as though points of light were shining behind them. The light in the room glinted on the points of light in his eyes like an opal.

"How much do you have?" he asked me.

"Seventy-five half grain syrettes."

"The regular price is two dollars a grain," he said, "but syrettes go for a little less. People want tablets. Those syrettes have too much water and you have to squeeze the stuff out and cook it down." He paused and his face went blank: "I could go about one-fifty a grain," he said finally.

"I guess that will be okay," I said.

Morphine hits the backs of the legs first, then the back of the neck ... so that you seem to float without outlines, like lying in warm salt water.

He asked how we could make contact and I gave him my phone number.

Joey came back with the whiskey and we all had a drink. Herman stuck his head in from the kitchen and said to Jack, "Could I talk to you for a minute?"

I could hear them arguing about something. Then Jack came back and Herman stayed in the kitchen. We all had a few drinks and Jack began telling a story.

"My partner was going through the joint. The guy was sleeping, and I was standing over him with a three-foot length of pipe I found in the bathroom. The pipe had a faucet on the end of it, see? All of a sudden he comes up and jumps straight out of bed, running. I let him have it with the faucet end, and he goes on running right out into the other room, the blood spurting out of his head ten feet every time his heart beat." He made a pumping motion with his hand. "You could see the brain there and blood coming out of it." Jack began to laugh uncontrollably. "My girl was waiting out in the car. She called me — ha-ha-ha! — a cold-blooded killer."

He laughed until his face was purple.

A few nights after meeting Roy and Herman, I used one of the syrettes, which was my first experience with junk. A syrette is like a toothpaste tube with a needle on the end. You push a pin down through the needle; the pin punctures the seal; and the syrette is ready to shoot.

Morphine hits the backs of the legs first, then the back of the neck, a spreading wave of relaxation slackening the muscles away from the bones so that you seem to float without outlines, like lying in warm salt water. As this relaxing wave spread through my tissues, I experienced a strong feeling of fear. I had the feeling that some horrible image was just beyond the field of vision, moving, as I turned my head, so that I never quite saw it. I felt nauseous; I lay down and closed my eyes. A series of pictures passed, like watching a movie: A huge, neon-lighted cocktail bar that got larger and larger until streets, traffic, and street repairs were included in it; a waitress carrying a skull on a tray; stars in the clear sky. The physical impact of the fear of death; the shutting off of breath; the stopping of blood.

I dozed off and woke up with a start of fear. Next morning I vomited and felt sick until noon.

Roy called that night.

"About what we were discussing the other night," he said. "I could go about four dollars per box and take five boxes now. Are you busy? I'll come over to your place. We'll come to some kind of agreement."

A few minutes later he knocked at the door. He had on a Glen plaid suit and a dark, coffee-colored shirt. We said hello. He looked around blankly and said, "If you don't mind, I'll take one of those now."

I opened the box. He took out a syrette and injected it into his leg. He pulled up his pants briskly and took out twenty dollars. I put five boxes on the kitchen table.

"I think I'll take them out of the boxes," he said. "Too bulky."

He began putting the syrettes in his coat pockets. "I don't think they'll perforate this way," he said. "Listen, I'll call you again in a day or so after I get rid of these and have some more money." He was adjusting his hat over his asymmetrical skull. "I'll see you."

Next day he was back. He shot another syrette and pulled out forty dollars. I laid out ten boxes and kept two.

"These are for me," I said.

He looked at me, surprised. "You use it?"

"Now and then."

"It's bad stuff," he said, shaking his head. "The worst thing that can happen to a man. We all think we can control it at first. Sometimes we don't want to control it." He laughed. "I'll take all you can get at this price."

Next day he was back. He asked if I didn't want to change my mind about selling the two boxes. I said no. He bought two syrettes for a dollar each, shot them both, and left. He said he had signed on for a two-month trip.

During the next month I used up the eight syrettes I had not sold. The fear I had experienced after using the first syrette was not noticeable after the third; but still, from time to time, after taking a shot I would wake up with a start of fear. After six weeks or so I gave Roy a ring, not expecting him to be back from his trip, but then I heard his voice on the phone.

I said, "Say, do you have any to sell? Of the material I sold you before?"

There was a pause.

"Ye-es," he said, "I can let you have six, but the price will have to be three dollars per. You understand I don't have many."

"Okay," I said. "You know the way. Bring it on over."

It was twelve one-half grain tablets in a thin glass tube. I paid him eighteen dollars and he apologized again for the retail rate.

Next day he bought two grains back.

"It's mighty hard to get now at any price," he said, looking for a vein in his leg. He finally hit a vein and shot the liquid in with an air bubble. "If air bubbles could kill you, there wouldn't be a junkie alive."

Later that day Roy pointed out to me a drugstore where they sold needles without any questions....

Kentucky Ham

Bill had known I was coming but he had to search the house to find a place for me to sleep. With a flashlight because something had happened to the electricity. "Wait for Ian," he said, another tenant, who came home later and fixed the electricity by going outside and striking a power pole with a broomstick.

I didn't sleep well that night. I beg you to remember that the last time I had slept was in Palm Beach on a mahogany dragon bed from the seventeenth century. And now here I lay listening to strange sounds and Arabic mutterings outside the window.

But I slept nonetheless and awoke the next morning to find Ian sitting on my bed looking at me like a loving mother. We talked for a few minutes and then he took my hand gently, ever so gently, and tried to draw it to his groin. But the attempt was premature and I pulled away. He didn't take it as hard as the old swish in the Parade though, and we were all friends that evening as he, my father, and Michael lit up their pipes. Very long pipes with clay bowls. I was curious about their contents..."Kif." I remembered the word from *Naked Lunch* and asked if I could try it out. "All in good time, Billy," said Ian. But the next day the good times rolled when Bill said, "Ian, take Billy down the Grande Soco and help him pick out a pipe."

That night, I took my first draw on the celebrated medicinal herb. Problem is, that in Morocco so many people smoke dope that it has become a social thing. So they mix it with a cruel and unusual tobacco that makes Gauloises taste like ambulance oxygen. "Goddamn!" I thought. "This is worse than whiskey." But as it happened, my father had some tasty little hashish candies on hand of which I consumed quite a number not knowing what they were, and then dipped into a Mason jar of homemade *majoun*, which is grass fixed up to eat and will stone you into the middle of next week, my friend.

Off the subject for a moment, *majoun* can be dangerous if prepared stupidly. I understand that about a month before I arrived in Tangier, Gregory Corso had dropped by for a visit. And that he, Bill, Ian, and Mike had all got together after a few drinks and rather drunkenly decided to consume a bit of *majoun*. So Michael went out to buy some tea, and damned if he didn't buy the tobacco-infiltrated variety. When he got back he just went ahead and cooked it all up replete with raisins and honey. About twenty minutes after ingestion, my father sensed something amiss and immediately repaired to the bathroom to vomit up the entire dose. Everyone else followed suit except Mr. Corso who stubbornly refused to believe there was anything wrong with the stuff, or that he couldn't handle it, if there was. So about an hour later he quietly excuses himself from the room and rushes back in red-eyed as a charging ostrich, flailing at Michael and shrieking, "Poisonerrr! Poisoner-r-r!" He chased him out of the house and all the way to the medina before he calmed down, a distance of some two and a half miles, but never caught him because he had to stop every few minutes to vomit. Dynamite cat.

You will hear people say that one never gets stoned the first time but I was so far gone that I couldn't even remember the onset. Only visions of the entire course of human history, from the apeman all asteam on the hostile plains on through the blessed virgin and plunging into the abyss of technology. After two million years, Ian nudged me gently and said that he'd like to go to sleep. "Oh! Sure man," I said and went downstairs to sleep very well.

Hash dream under the influence of earphones: I see two ruined buildings, their backs blown away; naked girders grope in a smoking twilit sky. On the tenth floor of each building, leaning out the window, is a pale man with a sheet of metal. They are playing a dreadful and hyenic game of Ping-Pong with something dark and indiscernible, perhaps a human head. Below them, as far as the eye can see, is a multitude of people on their knees, some with flaming hair. They rock from side to side, hands clasped, and follow the indiscernible object; and their wailing merges with the crashing of the sheet metal to shake the girders that grind and sway as technical fingers in the darkening

You will hear people say that one never gets stoned the first time but I was so far gone that I couldn't even remember the onset.

sky. I have the feeling that the man who misses the object first, loses and no matter who loses all the people die. Michael Portman stirred me from this dream with a look of concern on his face. When I told him what I had seen, he went and told Bill about it. Bill was at work, and when Michael was through he stopped typing long enough to say "very accurate" without looking up and then resumed business.

Our house in the Marshan was very fine. Two stories and consumed by mosaics. My father's room was austere to say the least. Spotlessly clean with an army-type bunk and a cabinet and that was all besides an incredibly haunting picture of a brooding moon done by his good friend Brion Gysin. I might mention that Mr. Gysin invented the cut-up method as applied to words or at least he was one of the first to take it seriously. The cut-up method enables the writer to achieve the same effect as the artist can with picture montage. The effect can be and often is shattering to the receptive reader because words are images in a much more personalized and internal sense than pictures. I recollect one mind-blowing ditty that my father had on his tape recorder. It was a word montage by Brion Gysin and consisted of one phrase: "I come to free the words." repeated over and over in different order. That is, "The words are free to come, I come freely to the words, The free come to the words..." And while the words were repeated, the speed of the tape was increased gradually until it became a supersonic whine. But because of the rhythm, and after the cartoon laughter stage, some part of the listener would keep pace until he was virtually transported. To where, I don't know, or cannot report.

There was also an orgone box in the upstairs hall in which my father would sit for hours at a time smoking kif and then rush out and attack his typewriter without warning.

The rooftops, by custom, are the women's province in Tangier because that's where they do all the washing and gossiping and whatnot. I made the mistake once of going up there during the day and the Arabs threw little pieces of mud at our door for the next week. But Bill would be on the roof every night to watch the colors in the sky as soon as the sun was starting to set. I would stumble to the roof occasionally, stoned out of my squash and would see him transfixed in his favorite spot. Transfixed and absolutely motionless, right hand holding the perpetual cigarette, lips parting to the sun, and himself stirring only to drop it when it burned his fingers. When it was finally, absolutely night, again, the sudden rush to the typewriter.

I tell you one thing though, he and everybody in that house had an appetite. Bunch of goddamn hashheads and I recollect one time I came back from the main part of town (stoned obviously) with an apple pie and a roasted chicken intent upon retiring to my room and plumbing the joys of the taste. But I was met at the door by the entire population. Zapo! One piece of pie left over and I went to my room to scarf up my angry piece of apple. Old Bill used the leftover chicken bones, scant and gnawed as they were, to make a soup that he cooked for two days using such an incredible amount of pepper that the stuff went down like whiskey. But he was so proud of the finished product that any visitor, including myself, was instantly overcome with compassion and "enjoyed" a cup and sometimes two under his imploring eyes. It would sometimes take a few minutes before the victim was able to express his appreciation.

I made the mistake once of going up there during the day and the Arabs threw little pieces of mud at our door for the next week.

Tangier was still pretty wild then. There was a cafe on a cliff called the Dancing Boy that Ian took me to my first time. Smells of hashish, kif, and mint tea. Beautiful music. The violinist sat cross-legged and played his violin upright before him like a cello. As we came in some European existentialist-type hippies whispered among themselves. They looked as if they hadn't seen daylight for years and were dressed entirely in black. They all had dark hair, underbelly skin, and black circles under their eyes.

The dancer wore long robes and a cork inner-tube affair with tassels around his hips, and did swirling routines with trays of water-filled glasses or with lit candles, which he some- how managed not to extinguish. Something to see.

The cafe closed about three A.M. and sometimes Ian and I or a fellow named Peter would laugh down the street with the musicians and dart into a strange house there to continue clapping and dancing and listening and smoking until everyone dropped. Pick ourselves up at dawn and rush to the bakery to catch the boy wheeling out the new loaves in a barrow on his way to deliver to the shops. Buy a huge round loaf too hot to handle without wrapping it in a shirt and stop before home for a pound of fresh butter from a clay urn at the neighborhood 7-11.

These were pleasant times, but I couldn't make it; I was too young and found it difficult to get involved. I took to wandering the ocean cliffs with my pipe and quarter pound of unadulterated grass that Michael had very kindly gone out and got when he saw me choking one night on the other shit. I'd sit on trees that grew sideways out of the cliffs and smoke until I was unable or unwilling to make the climb back. Wait a while and walk through the alleys admiring the colored broken glass placed on top of the rich folks' walls to keep out the riffraff. I went to cafes, movies (try watching a French movie dubbed into Arabic sometime), beaches, but I couldn't figure out what was wrong until one night Ian came to my room and told me I wanted to go home.

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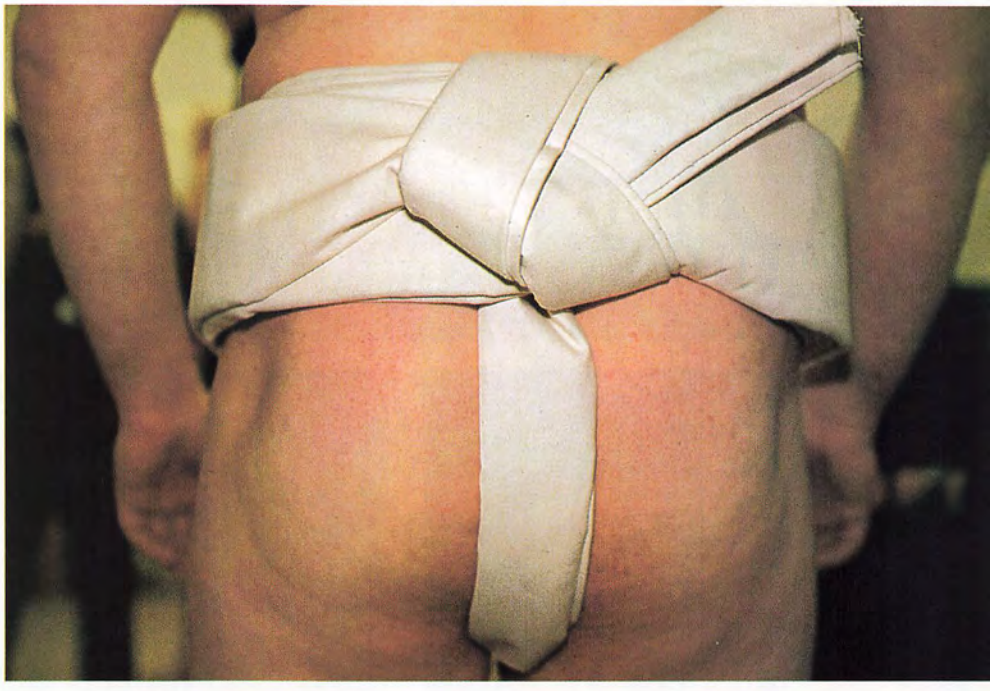
ABOVE: THE THRILL OF VICTORY.
AT RIGHT: THE AGONY OF THE MEAT.



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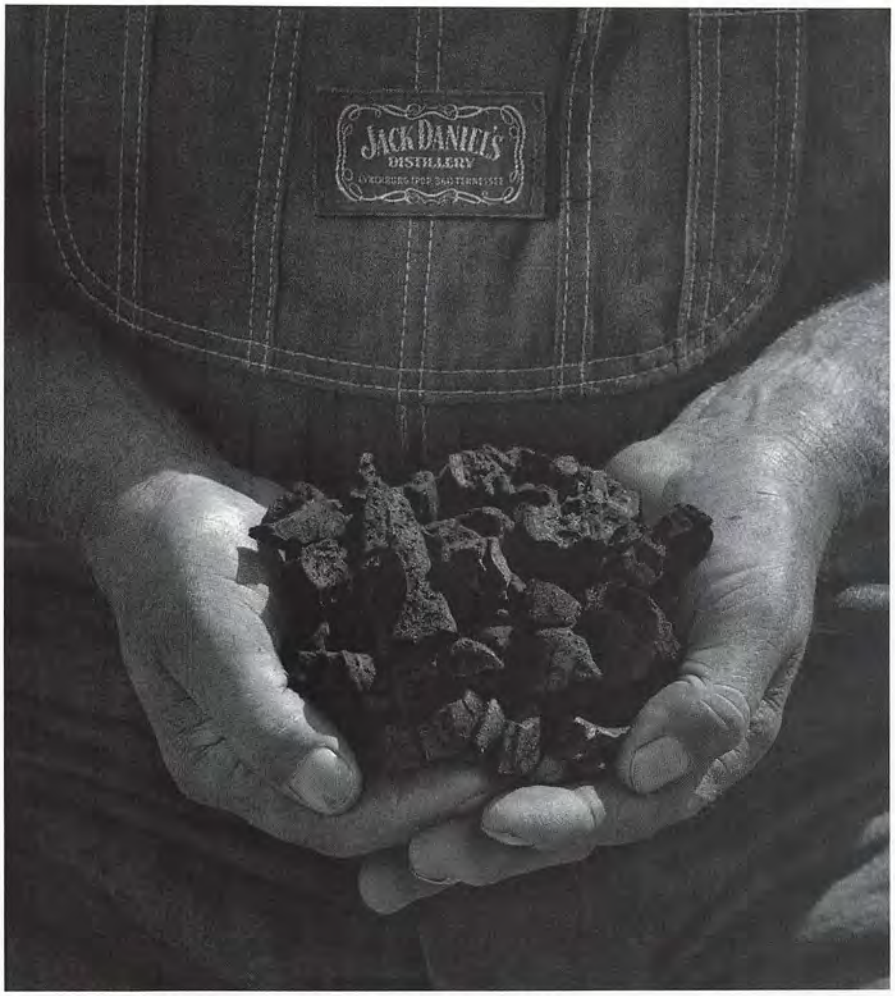

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É LEI HA
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PICHUTO É
ROMA.

An old guy goes to the doctor.
After his exam, the doctor says, "You've got cancer and Alzheimer's."
The old guy says, "Thank God I haven't got cancer."

AIR HEADS

Roger Clinton goes for skydiving lessons. The instructor says, "It's very simple. You leap out of the plane, and you pull the rip cord. If nothing happens, you pull the emergency cord. It's that easy." Roger goes up in the plane, jumps out, and *completely* forgets.
He's got no idea what to do.
He's like *Zooomm!*
All of a sudden, he passes Jesse Jackson coming *up*.
Roger says, "Hey, Jesse...you know anything about parachutes?"

Jackie

MARTLING'S JOKELAND

Jesse says, "No. You know how to light a gas stove?"

Why are lesbians so lazy?
They don't do dick.

Why did Vince Coleman's girlfriend break up with him?
Because he lit the fuse to her tampon.

What's black and white, black and white, black and white, green, and screams?
Three horny nuns fighting over a pickle.

Clark, dead drunk, goes to the doctor. He says, "Doc, you gotta help me. My pecker fell off."
The doctor says, "Where is it?"
Clark says, "Right here in my pocket," and hands it to the doctor.
The doctor says, "This is a cigar."
Clark says, "Omigod! I smoked my dick!"

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SHORT CUTS

THE PAW THAT ROCKS THE CRADLE

A female langur who lives in the Indian village of Dariapur-Siwala has been adopted as the unofficial baby sitter for all the infants in the area. "She is better than my child's real mother," said Kailash Saol, who leaves his two-month-old baby with the monkey when he and his wife are busy.

Aspiring Attorney Generals take note: No green card required for baby sitting langurs.

DON'T DRINK AND — ANYTHING

Sixty percent of pedestrians 16 and over who were killed at night in 1991 had blood alcohol levels of 0.1 or more, enough to get you arrested for drunk driving. That may be related to the fact that two percent of pedestrian fatalities occur while the person is lying in the road.

Wasn't there a song, "Dead drunk in the middle of the road?"

TWINS GO BETTER WITH COKE

The father of the Siamese twins born last June and separated in August so that one might live, admitted to having purchased cocaine with money that had been donated to cover the twins' medical expenses.

Kenneth Lakeberg blew $1,300 worth of donations on a three-day cocaine binge before the surgery which separated the twins. Lakeberg spent $8,000 of the donations on meals, car rentals, and overdue bills. Another $5,500 went to buy a car.

"Sure, I went out and had some fun," said Mr. Lakeberg. "We ate at nice places. We travelled good. I mean, I think we deserve at least that much."

Lakeberg, who was on probation for having stabbed his cousin during an argument last Christmas, may face a jail sentence for his drug use.

Next time, buddy, just have a cigar.

FOOD FIGHT!

A deadly new weapon has appeared on the streets of San Francisco: the potato (no *e*) gun. The homemade gun is made from plastic piping, with barrels about two inches around and up to five feet long. A potato is placed in the barrel and propelled by the explosion of lighter fluid.

"If it hit someone on the head, it would break their skull," said Police Officer Mike Marchiano, of Martinez, California. "You cannot see the potato flying through the air, it's going so fast."

In nearby Concord, California, a blast shattered the storefront of a cafe.

"Pieces of potato were all over the place," explained Concord Police Officer Joe Kreins.

Gee, just loading the Salad Shooter makes us nervous.

ALIENS FROM NOT-SO-OUTER SPACE

The body of a man fell from the sky over Paris, France into Bernard and Denise Bisson's garden. According to officials, the man (killed on impact) was an illegal alien who'd stowed away in the landing gear of an airplane.

Every time it rains, it rains Pakis from heaven.

THE BATS DUNG IT

When the Romanian castle of Count Dragasani exploded, authorities were quick to suspect Syrians from across the Danube river. But after conducting a thorough investigation, the local bomb squad revealed that the real cause of the blast was methane gas from rotting bat dung. The castle, reputed to be 175 years old and home to a vampire, was leveled by the blast.

The 10,000 bats, which were responsible for the several feet of dung that released the deadly gas, are looking for a new home.

Have they tried Bosnia-Herzogovia?

HERE COMES THE GROOM — NO, THAT'S THE PRIEST — NO, THAT'S THE GROOM

The Third Congress of Married Catholic Priests was held recently in Madrid, Spain bringing together priests from 20 countries to reflect on the role of the married priest in the service of God. According to the delegates, worldwide some 100,000 priests have renounced their vows as a result of marriage.

Hey, it beats playing hide the salami in the rectory.

JESUS CHRIST, STOP HOGGING THE BATHROOM

Hundreds of people have flocked to a Manhattan apartment building to see what churchgoers believe to be an image of Jesus Christ etched on a bathroom window.

Twenty-four policemen were assigned to crowd control as dozens of pilgrims, some sick or handicapped, gathered around what many considered a sign from God.

Thirty-eight-year-old Rosa Diez, whose bathroom contains the miraculous image, said, "My neighbor called me and said that the face of Jesus was in the window. Then other neighbors began to stop by."

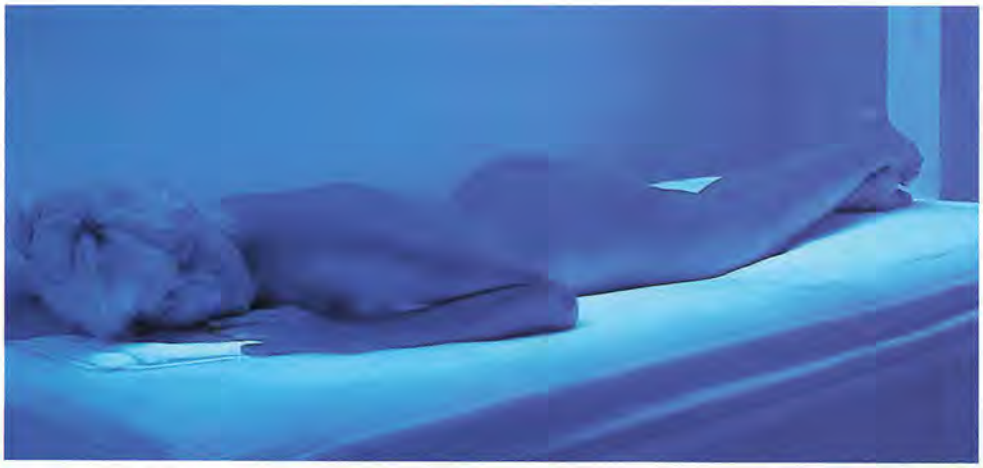
Personally, we prefer our Jesus faces on tortillas.

FROGS ON HOGS

The Hells Angels of France (We know, we know, they probably sit around and eat really stinky cheese) hold their annual summer get-together in the small town of Cunlhat, France, where 30,000 people and 10,000 motorcycles come together for four days of racing, rock 'n' roll, arm wrestling contests and free wine.

That's about it; we just like saying Hells Angels of France.

RUMORS



TANNING NOTIONS

The rumor: My fiancee and I are planning a honeymoon in Hawaii. She just told me that she's going to go to a tanning salon every day for a week before we leave. I don't want her to, because I once heard about a girl who overdosed from the microwaves in the tanning booth. As she got tanner and tanner, she started to stink, a smell that wouldn't go away. When she went to her doctor, he told her that she had cooked her insides from the microwaves, and within a few days the girl was dead. My fiancee says this is the stupidest thing she's ever heard, but the guy who told me the story said he knew the girl personally. What's up? Am I going to have a barbecued bride?

The truth: Relax and let her tan. Tanning booths don't use microwaves; they use ultraviolet radiation, the same light waves that tan you naturally. No reputable tanning salon will let her tan more than three times a week, anyway. Plus, it will lower the chances of her getting an unbearable (read: untouchable) sunburn on your honeymoon.

HOLIDAY ON ICE

The rumor: My aunt swears that she was told on a tour of Disneyland that Walt Disney had his body frozen with instructions left to thaw him out when a cure for lung cancer was discovered. So where is he? In Cinderella's Castle? Under the Teacups? Stashed away in Space Mountain? Don't tell me he's frozen for all eternity in It's a Small World!

The truth: Walt, who died of cancer of the left lung on December 15, 1966, was cremated and his remains were buried at the venerable Forest Lawn Cemetery, in case you want to drop by to pay your respects.

SLAUGHTER, RINSE, REPEAT

The rumor: The girl who cuts my hair insists that I buy all my shampoo and conditioner from her, because any product that contains "protein" has some derivative of animal blood in it. Is this true?

The truth: What, putting animal blood on your hair is worse than eating steak? Don't be so squeamish. Actually, protein in hair products is not derived from blood, but if one of the ingredients listed on the bottle is "keratin," that does come from animal hair — and not from the sweepings off the floor at the ranch barbershop. Another ingredient used in shampoos is "hydrolyzed animal protein," derived from cow hooves — just like Jell-O.

HAM BONE

The rumor: A few weeks back, a friend of mine mentioned something about homosexuals and hamsters. Do gay guys really insert those fuckers where the sun don't shine?

The truth: For years we have pored through medical journals in search of a confirmed hamster-in-asshole sighting. Still looking. However, research has turned up a variety of objects that people have placed in their rectum, sending them to the ER: a syringe, a hard-boiled egg, a pair of eyeglasses, a peanut butter jar, a flashlight (it's dark in there), a baseball, a ballpoint pen, bananas, cucumbers, zucchini, soda bottles, carrots, light bulbs, and a bottle of Mrs. Butterworth's pancake syrup.

Ed. Note: Heard a good one? Send it in c/o Rumors, Platinum Magazine, 7060 Hollywood Blvd., Suite 800, Hollywood, CA 90028.

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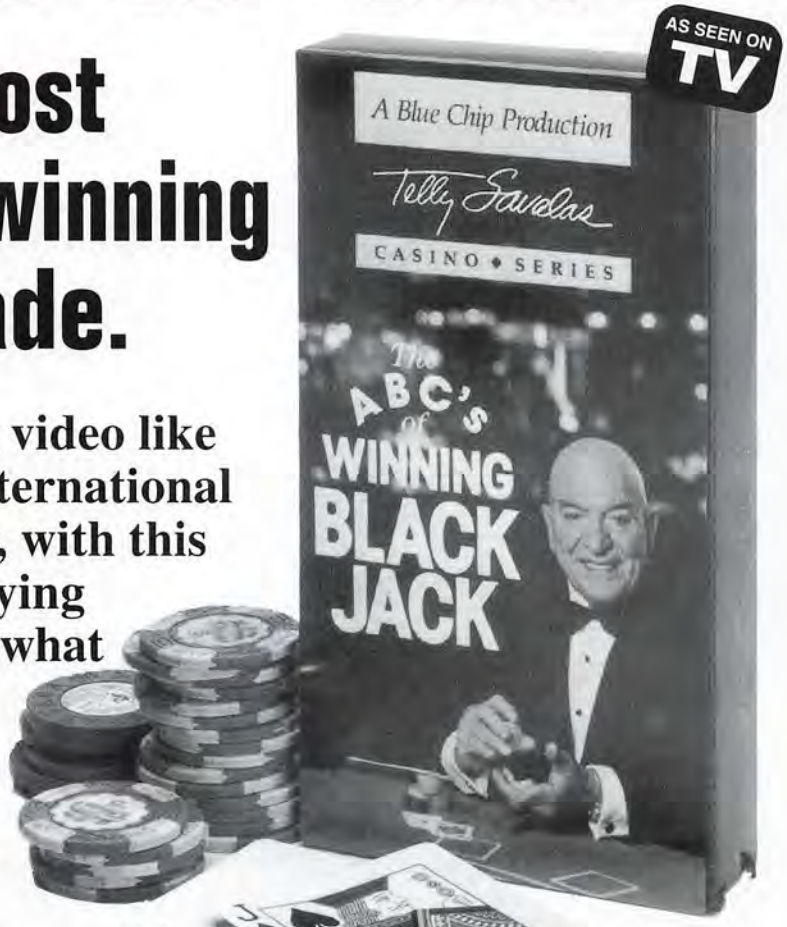

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PEACE, LOVE & MUMMIFICATION

As we go to press, former hippie guru Ira Samuel Einhorn, 53, is standing trial in absentia *in Philadelphia Superior Court for the gruesome, 1977 slaying of girlfriend Helen Maddux. A verdict has yet to be handed down. If found guilty, Einhorn, a long-time fugitive from justice, will likely face the death penalty.*

Sixties political activist and Harvard fellow Ira Einhorn met Helen Maddux in October 1972. Known as the "Unicorn" in the counter culture scene, Einhorn was an intellectual mover and shaker, at one time friendly with Jerry Rubin, Timothy Leary and Abbie Hoffman. He was also a womanizer with a violent streak, who, according to two former girlfriends, could suddenly become "like a werewolf" or "madman." Maddux was a tall, attractive, blonde intellectual from a wealthy, ultra-conservative family in Tyler, Texas.

By late 1977, the couple had lived together for five years. By September 10th, Maddux, then 30 years old, had decided to end it and move to New York. Einhorn was pissed.

Sometime during the next 24 hours, Philadelphia police say, Einhorn struck Maddux with a heavy, blunt object, crushing her skull and driving her jaw up into her head. A student living on the floor below later remembered hearing banging and a short scream that "sent shivers" up his spine.

The next day, Einhorn asked two young women to help him dump a steamer trunk in the Schuylkill River. He told them it contained valuable documents belonging to the Russians, and he had to get rid of them before the FBI found out about them. But the trunk would not fit in the car.

Z.Z. Bottom: Police photo of alleged killer Ira Samuel Einhorn, circa 1979.

Over the next few weeks, the neighbors complained about a mysterious stench, and a sticky red substance leaking down from Einhorn's apartment. In Texas, Holly's mother became concerned when she didn't send birthday greetings. She called Ira, but he brushed the mother off. In December, the family hired a private investigator to find their missing daughter.

Ira, meanwhile, was off lecturing and studying at Harvard. He would not sublet his Philadelphia apartment, and no one, he told the landlord, was to be allowed into the locked porch closet.

Early in 1978, the Philadelphia Police began investigating the possible link between Einhorn and Helen's disappearance. Finally, on March 28, 1979, police investigators arrived at the apartment armed with a search warrant and buzz saws. They were prepared to dismantle the place.

Acting disinterested, Einhorn claimed he didn't have a key for the closet or for the trunk inside. Prying open the trunk, Detective Michael Chitwood made a grisly discovery. As he pushed aside foam and newspapers, he uncovered a mummified hand, wrist and forearm dangling inside a plaid flannel shirt. The remains were later identified by the coroner as those of Helen Maddux.

The following week, Einhorn was arrested for murder. He claimed he'd been set up, possibly by the CIA, and a parade of witnesses helped get his bail reduced to $40,000.

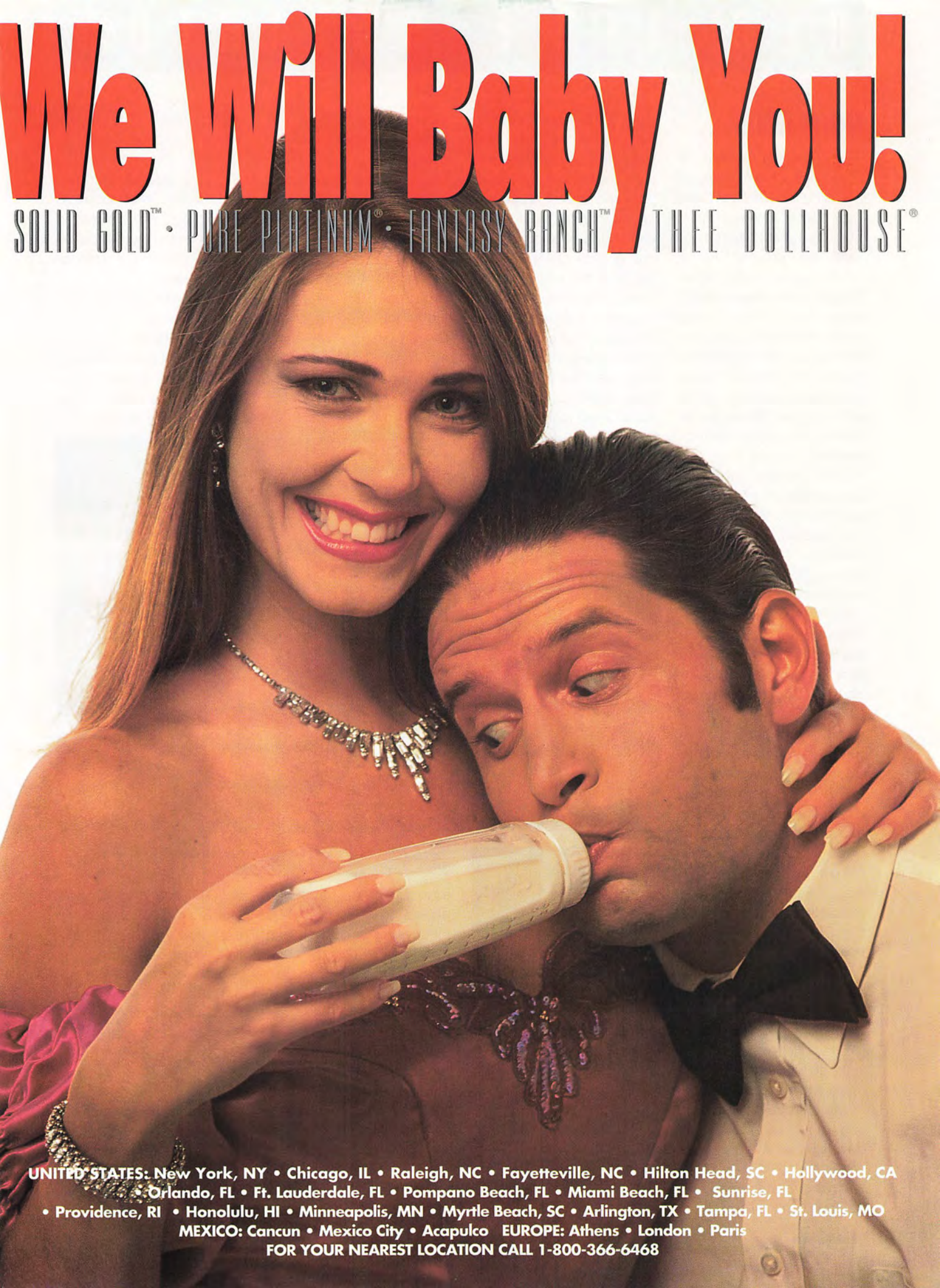
"I want to be very direct about this," Einhorn told the Philadelphia Inquirer. "I did not kill whoever it's supposed to be in there. I am not a killer. I do not know how a body got in there — if there was a body....My record is one of protest, not violence. I don't conceive of myself as a public enemy."

Einhorn added that if he went to prison, he would demand the death penalty, since he would not spend his life in jail.

But Einhorn had no intention of standing trial. He failed to appear for a pretrial hearing on January 13, 1981. Investigators say he fled to Ireland, then to Sweden, where authorities missed him by a day in 1988. They believe that Einhorn is still in Europe, a free man.

Einhorn stands 5'9", weighs 230 pounds, has brown hair, blue eyes and acne scars on his jaw. He is probably clean shaven with closely cropped hair, in contrast to his hippie days. An intellectual, he speaks in a breathy rush of words and has a giddy, high-pitched laugh. He could be in a university setting, and has used the alias "Ben Moore." If you have information on the whereabouts of Ira Einhorn, contact the Fugitive Unit, Philadelphia District Attorney (215/686-8922), or the FBI.

—Jack Breslin ●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MEN IN TIGHTS

If the role required me to suck off Horst, I'd do it. —Richard Gere. Great. In the old days, Hollywood type-cast its movies. As a result, casting made sense. Tough guys played tough guys ("You dirty rat, you killed my mutta") and the sissies danced ("You mean like this, Mr. Berkley? Tap-a-tap-a-tap-a-tap-swish-swish-tap?" "No, no, Marcel, tap-a-tap-swish-swish-swish-swish-tap!"). God.

Okay, maybe it was a simple formula, but there was no confusion, no suspension of disbelief necessary in order to enjoy the film. Movies, for the most part, were credible.

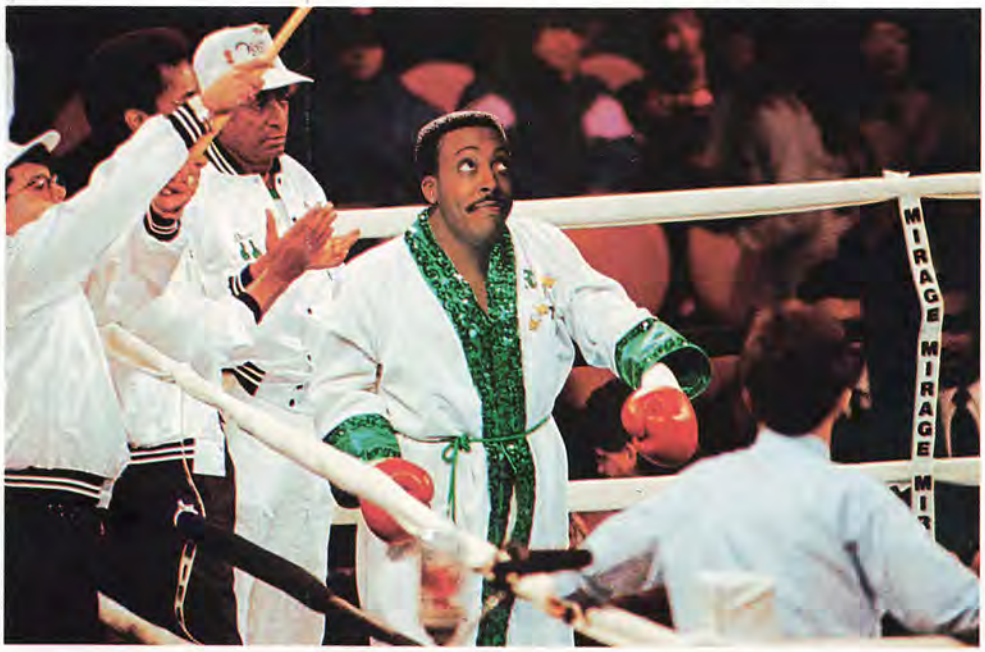
But these days I'm expected to buy the Brooklyn fucking Bridge — Richard Gere as a fighter pilot, Tom Cruise as the Vampire Lestat, Christian Slater as a street-smart cop. Want more? I'll give you more. Kevin Costner as a baseball player, Kevin Costner as Robin Hood, Kevin Costner as a bodyguard and, soon, Kevin Costner as Wyatt Earp. (Who's his agent?) The last time Kevin Costner was properly cast was in "The Big Chill" (he played the dead guy).

If you like tough guy movies, you've been cheated lately. And if you like westerns, you better run for the hills. Hollywood is back in the cowboy business, with more than a dozen such movies already in production and another dozen in development. Twenty-four nails in my coffin, I'm sure.

Cowboyana boomed in the '50s, spurred on, as it were, by the great cowboy actors. Anthony Quinn, Kirk Douglas, Burt Lancaster and John Wayne, with the help of just a handful of rough and tumble drifters, could drive something like four and a half grillion cows up from Texas to the stockyards of Dodge. They rolled their own cigarettes and put out camp fires with a half cup of coffee ("Well, fellers, let's get some rest, we'll be a needin' it come sun up." *Ploosh!*). These were real men. They stomped Injun ass. They blew each other's balls off every night in saloons and brought in the danged herd every garl-derned time.

And I don't think they sucked off Horst along the way. Okay?

Certain things are irrefutable. On moonless nights the ocean is black. Dwight Gooden will never again win 27 games. And today's male leads have no more in common with the leading men of old than, say, scientists have with priests.



Arsenio as 'Berto (above); Danson as contendah (below).

Hollywood is losing it, and I can see it all now. Here come the remakes from Hell. "On The Waterfront," starring Ted Danson. "White Heat," starring Rob Lowe. "The Dirty Dozen," featuring a rugged, all-star line-up of Johnny Depp, Robert Downey, Jr. and Patrick Swayze.

And what about the movies that are yet to be made? How about RuPaul as Muhammad Ali, or Arsenio Hall in "The Life and Times of Roberto Duran?" Is there a "Vince Lombardi Story" in Rodney Dangerfield's future? Probably. Remember, Pierce Brosnan was once the leading candidate to play the role of James Bond.

Of course, bad casting isn't necessarily a men's men syndrome. Sylvester Stallone isn't exactly the guy I would have chosen to play the broad comedic role in "Stop, Or My Mother Will Shoot." Equally unlikely was Mel Gibson as Hamlet. My personal vote for the all-time, worst casting ever has to be that of Barbra Streisand playing a prostitute in the movie, "Nuts." Sure, that could happen... in Tel Aviv...maybe. Yea, hot Hassidic meat on call, just for you!

You want an example of appropriate casting, check out the fat chick in that nun movie, "Sister Act."

I'm starting to panic. I am alone. —T. Fresh ●

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